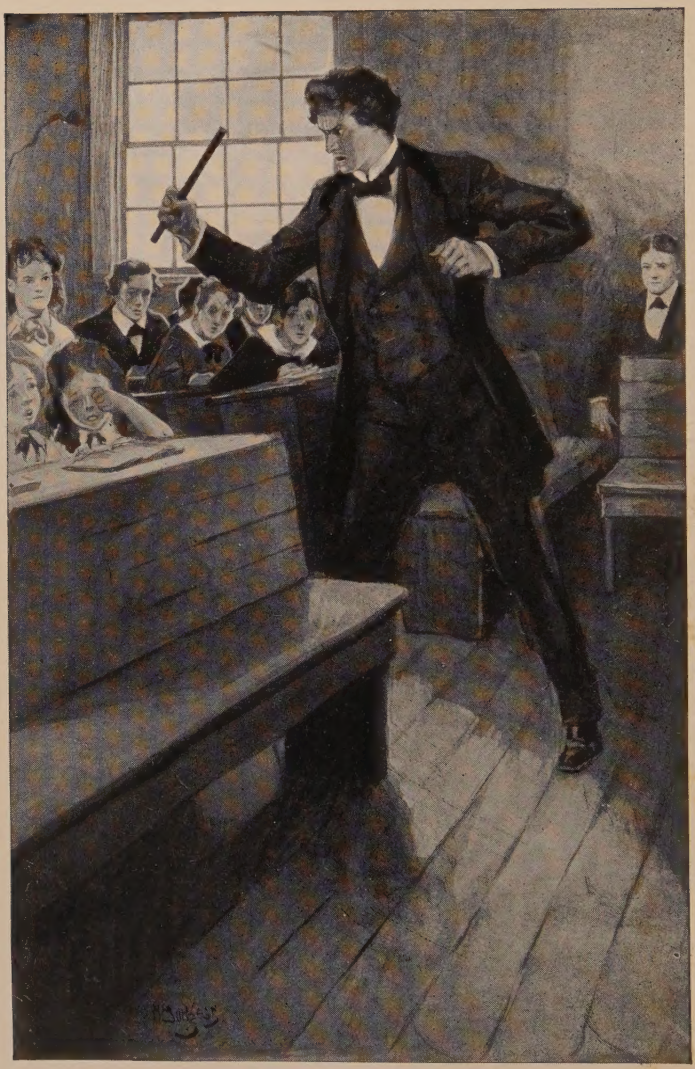
A GREAT YEAR OF OUR LIVES

AT THE OLD SQUIRE'S

C. A. STEPHENS

Marshall.



THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER

A Great Year of Our Lives

At the Old Squire's

BY

C. A. STEPHENS

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DEDICATED

WITH CORDIAL BEST

WISHES TO THE MANY

Readers of the Youth's Companion

WHO HAVE SO KINDLY REMEMBERED

US AT THE OLD SQUIRE'S

FARM

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A Great Year of Our Lives

At the Old Squire's

CHAPTER I

THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER

THE winter school at the Old Squire's was to begin on Monday following Thanksgiving; and for several weeks our interest and attention had centered about the old red schoolhouse, down at the forks of the road, leading to the Corners.

They have built a new schoolhouse there now in place of the large old red one, a neat, modern structure, painted white, with new patent desks and chairs, also adjustable blackboards and globe; and there are portraits of Washington, Lincoln, Lafayette and Ben. Franklin on the walls. It is a great improvement; every one says so; yet I cannot help missing the old red one where I went to school that first winter after coming to Maine.

The day they tore the old house down I really felt quite sad. It does not seem like the same place there now, and memory runs back somewhat regretfully, as I pass to those old eventful winter terms under Master Joel Pierson, Master Cummings, Master French and young Thomas Jefferson Cobb who was drowned in the Kennebec. Excellent teachers they were; possibly there are as good instructors now, but I cannot help doubting it.

We set great store by our winter school then, and so would boys and girls at present, if they had but ten weeks a year, — for only girls and little boys attended the summer school. Throughout the entire year we doted on that coming winter term of school.

Really, we made remarkable progress; those old masters pushed us lovingly on. In one winter, when fourteen, my cousin Addison mastered Greenleaf's National Arithmetic and could perform every example in it; but to do this he had worked morning and evening as well as during school hours. Those teachers possessed the gift of firing our hearts with an ambition to learn. How did they do it? Their own hearts were in it. To this day I feel the thrill of Master Pierson's enthusiasm and his faith in us, as he laid out long lessons and somehow made us feel sure that we could learn them. What a true friend he was! I take off my hat reverently to his memory.

They were all good teachers, every one — but no, there was an exception. We did have one poor teacher, yes, he was a bad teacher. It came about in a singular way. It was "the year rum reigned in No. 11," — for that was the way we always referred to it. That winter — the winter of 1867 — there was a strange state of things at the old schoolhouse. I shall have to explain it a little.

In Maine at that time, each and every country school district governed itself and managed its own affairs. A school meeting of the legal residents of the district was held every spring to elect a school agent, bid off teacher's board, fuel, etc. The agent chosen hired the teachers and was in charge of the school property. The day of centralism and supervisors was not yet. In the matter of its school business every district was a small republic, largely independent of the town or county in which it was situated.

The system had its advantages, also a few disadvantages. It kept the people keenly alive to the in-

terests of their school. An abuse of it was the tendency on the part of agents, sometimes, to hire teachers in whom they were personally interested from kinship, or otherwise. But as a rule, there was an honest intent on the part of the agent to get the best teachers he could for the money.

In No. 11 harmony had prevailed for years. There had been few dissensions, until the spring of 1866. Then an element of discord and disorder entered, and I must needs admit that the cause of it was the State Liquor Law.

Now the "Maine Law," so called, has done an untold amount of good. It would be indeed strange, however, if some abuses had not attended its enforcement. The law sometimes fomented animosity and set not only school districts but whole towns by the ears. Yet there are many who hold that intemperance is an evil so terrible that it is better to set people by the ears than to ignore it, — but we need not go into that here.

Three-fourths of the families, or heads of families, in No. 11 were temperate, law-abiding citizens, but we had one bad man among us.

For some reason Nature, in fashioning men, does not always produce a good citizen. It must needs be owned that there are many bad jobs, and one of the worst of these was our neighbor, Tibbetts, out at the Corners.

Tibbetts was one of those men who, their lives long, drag the community down hill. He sold rum in defiance of the State Law; and he manufactured the rum himself; that is to say, he made four barrels from one by the addition of substances deleterious to the human organism. In a small and mean way he was a gambler and his "store" a resort for such as could be drawn into card games, "hustling" and dicing.

Personally, he was a heavy-set, wheezy man, much bloated from intemperance, red-faced, repulsive, yet

possessed of strong vitality and not a little energy, abetted by great craftiness.

At first thought one might say that such a person would have very little influence in any average community, and that it ought not to be difficult to suppress him. But in a state with a strict liquor law, such a man is often able to enlist strong support.

During the winter of 1865-6, Tibbetts' place was the scene of a brawl, ending in a manslaughter, and altogether became so scandalous, that the Old Squire felt it incumbent on him to enforce the "Law," with the result that Tibbetts was fined one hundred dollars and costs.

It followed, of course, that such a man would seek to be revenged, and the way Tibbetts took to spite us, was to get control of the school district. Not that he cared the least for the welfare of the school. It was purely for revenge; and he went about this with a cunning worthy of a better object.

Near his grocery at the Corners, he owned two ramshackle old houses, and in these he contrived to domicile, as tenants, two shiftless families who would do his bidding. He had also a son, Jerry Tibbetts, recently arrived at the age of twenty-one, who though absent from home still retained a residence there as a voter. That winter, too, he hired a man of his own stamp, to tend store for him, and had the fellow fetch his trunk and make his legal residence at the Corners.

Thus, before we were aware, he secured a majority in the school meeting of March, 1866, and elected a man of his own choosing, named Glinds, as school agent. There were but eighteen legal voters in the district, and as six of them were opponents of the Maine Law, two of them very intemperate, Tibbetts was able to get his man elected. Glinds was one of his rum-debtors.

When we young folks at the Old Squire's learned what had happened at school meeting, we were both

angry and alarmed, particularly Addison, Theodora and Ellen, and our two young neighbors, Catherine and Thomas Edwards. These five were the best scholars in the district and had now but a few years more to attend school.

Before this, for three winters, the school had been taught by Master Pierson, a talented young man who was working his way through college. He excelled in algebra and English grammar. He hung the walls of the old schoolhouse with maps and charts of his own, and brought with him a cabinet organ, also his own property.

To secure the services of such a teacher, twenty-seven dollars per month — large wages then — was paid, with board. But never before had the school made such progress; in three winters No. 11 came to rank first in the town.

Hence we were all very desirous of having Master Pierson returned the following winter, and when it was learned that Glinds had been elected agent, a petition to this effect, bearing the names of forty out of forty-nine of the scholars in the district, was presented to him.

On reading it Glinds seemed confused, but made no reply, nor could we learn anything as to his intentions, if he had any; but Tibbetts gave out that no more high-priced teachers would be hired. The excuse was "economy," so often the pretext of those who wish to do wrong.

We knew from this that Master Pierson was lost to us and felt badly over it. Theodora, Ellen and Kate Edwards actually shed tears of regret and resentment. Being greatly interested, we made frequent inquiries, but during that whole season, till near Thanksgiving, we could learn nothing as to whom that old sot at the Corners meant to hire as our teacher. Tibbetts was gratifying his malice. Well he knew how he could best do so.

Proper care was not given the schoolhouse that season. Agent Glinds and Tibbetts did not deem such matters worthy of attention. In consequence there was diphtheria among the small pupils during the summer term, which the physician who attended them pronounced due to the bad sanitary condition there.

Shortly before Thanksgiving a rumor reached us that the new schoolmaster's name was Samuel Lurvey and that he hailed from Lurvey's Mills, ten or eleven miles from us. Some of the young folks had seen him. He was about twenty-one, they said, a large, strong young man, the son of "Old Jack Lurvey," the owner of the lumber mills. Those who knew him did not speak very highly of him, but they said that he had attended the village Academy for two years, and that his father wished him to teach.

Every one in that county knew Old Jack Lurvey, an illiterate man of violent temper who had become wealthy in the lumber business. It was said of him that, being unable to read or write, he kept his accounts with kernels of corn and beans of different colors, on the attic floor of his house, but that no one ever got the better of him in business matters.

To those who are interested in heredity, I may add here that this Lurvey's wife, our new master's mother, had been a servant girl of foreign birth, whom "Old Jack" married from a Portland tavern. While this ought not to be mentioned against the son, it may even show in apology for him, since his boyhood at home was amidst rude, rough associations, where violent outbursts of temper and bad language were of daily occurrence.

But "Old Jack" had sent his son to the Academy and was now determined that he should "keep school." It transpired afterwards that he had a private understanding with Tibbetts to hire Samuel;

Lurvey senior was not averse to a glass of rum at times, himself.

Young Master Lurvey was to be paid seventeen dollars per month; he would have been dear at less. At Lurvey's Mills municipal affairs went on as "Old Jack" dictated; in a small way he was an adroit politician and knew how to manage people. Even before our school began a curious instance of his craftiness showed itself.

Saturday afternoon after Thanksgiving, Addison and I, with my cousin Halstead, were cutting up turnips and beets for the young cattle at the west barn, when we heard bells, and, looking out, saw that an elderly man, driving a spirited chestnut horse, with new sleigh and bear-skin robes, had come up the lane. The man got out and hitched his horse to a post and we noticed that he tested the ring in the post carefully.

"That looks like Old Jack Lurvey, our new master's father," whispered Addison. "Wonder what he's come for?"

Lurvey senior glanced at the house, then came to the open barn door, nodded and inquired for the Old Squire who was away from home that day. He did not seem greatly disappointed, looked at our live stock, asked how we fed them, and talked for some time, addressing himself mostly to Addison.

"What think o' that colt o' mine, young man?" he at length said to him.

"He's a handsome one," replied Addison.

"Yes, he is a good colt, and he's a pretty stepper, too," continued our visitor. "Never drawed rein over a hoss I liked better. Hop in and let me show ye how he handles a sleigh."

Addison was a little surprised, but buttoned up his coat and got in the sleigh beside the owner of the colt, who turned and drove down the lane and out on the road at a fine pace.

As much as half an hour passed before they came

back to the foot of the lane, where our caller put Addison down and drove away. The latter came back to the barn, but seemed preoccupied; he was smiling covertly.

"How did you like the 'stepper?'" I asked him.

"O very well," said he absently. But later in the winter he told us what had passed.

It would appear that Lurvey senior had learned that Addison was the most advanced scholar in the school district and the boy who had most influence. After "talking horse" awhile, he turned the conversation to school matters and the subject of his son, soon to be our teacher. Very adroitly he sounded Addison as to his good-will toward him.

"Now, my Sam's all right on book-larnin', I guess," he remarked; "but he's young and never teached before; and he may have some ways that some of ye, over here, may not quite take to, at fust." (It would seem that Old Jack was not blind to certain of his son's traits and deficiencies.)

"Now I'm anxious to have him git through all right," Lurvey senior continued. "I can see that you know 'bout how a school oughter be run; and I can see that ef a boy like you went in fer the master and stood up fer him, stiff and strong, 'twould make a big diffrunce with the other scholars. An' you can see, yerself, that 'twill be better to stand by him and all pull together fer a good school than to pull apart. So I ax ye, as a favor, to go in for my Sam, good and solid; and" (lowering his voice) "I never axes anybuddy to help me for nothing; here's a nice new five dollar bill ter slip into yer vest pocket."

Addison had already begun to mistrust what was coming. He was a good deal taken aback, none the less, but gathered his wits to extricate himself from a position so equivocal and delicate, and he got out of it pretty well.

"O I want a good school, Mr. Lurvey," said he.

"I'll help the master in every way I can to make the school a success. I like money, too, Mr. Lurvey. I would be glad of that five dollars. Still, as I do not yet know how much I may be able to help him, I would not like to take this beforehand. If I find that I have been of any real service to your son, at the close of the school, I will remind you of this."

Old Jack was not wholly satisfied. It was not what he wanted. He said no more, however; but he was much too keen a man not to form a favorable opinion of Addison's sagacity, and he always kept him in mind. Several years later, quite unexpectedly, he made him a proposition to take charge of a wood-pulp manufacturing business in which he had embarked.

Peradventure, Old Jack's influence had assisted his son in passing his examination before a member of the town School Committee. There was much wonder as to this later in the winter. Then, however, we knew very little of our new master save by hearsay, and hoped to have a good school. Theodora, I remember, was feverishly anxious as to this. On Saturday evening before school began, Monday, there was a general muster of our school books from the "book cupboard." Theodora even tried some of the hard examples in the National Arithmetic, which she had been able to perform at the close of school the winter before.

"O dear, it seems as if I had forgotten everything I ever knew!" she lamented. "I cannot get these right!"

"It will all come back to you, Doad, after a day or two at school," said Addison to comfort her. But she was far from reassured.

"If I have forgotten how to do this sum in Equation of Payments, when I worked it so many times last winter, it's of no use for me to study at all!" she declared disconsolately. "I cannot do it now to save my life!"

"Doad, you've fed chickens too long this summer. Your head has weakened!" cried Halstead to hector her; but he had himself forgotten how far he had advanced in his own arithmetic, and even did not know his own book, by sight!

In order to lengthen the winter school, the Old Squire had, long before, made a standing offer to the district to board the master at the nominal sum of one dollar per week, if no one else wished to board him at that rate. Master Pierson had been so popular that, expecting he would return, the Batchelder family in the district had bid off the board at ninety-five cents, to have him with them evenings. But now, on Saturday, Mrs. Batchelder, hearing who was to teach, called and asked us to board the master. Not wholly pleased, the Old Squire and Gram assented, and the "east chamber" was put in order. He was expected Sunday evening, but did not arrive.

How well I recall that Monday morning and our setting off for school!

According to former law and custom, the old schoolhouse stood at the geographical center of the school district, at a place where three roads diverged, one to the Corners half a mile away, one to the Old Squire's farm and our neighbors beyond us, and the third to the Darnley neighborhood.

It was a cloudy morning; snow had fallen during the night, but by eight o'clock a blithe smoke was rising from the schoolhouse chimney, and from that time on till nine, groups of the scholars could be seen approaching along all three roads. Some had even gone before eight, Newman Darnley and Alfred Batchelder among the number, in order to secure the best seats. There were benches and desks for about fifty pupils, placed in four rows, opposite the teacher's higher desk, with one much longer seat on each side, flanking the floor and stove. On either hand of the teacher's desk was an enclosed "cuddy," one for the

girls' wraps, the other for the boys' caps, and the water-pail and dipper. The outer door was also at the right of the teacher's desk, between it and the boys' cuddy.

The boys occupied two rows of seats and one of the long seats on the north side of the schoolhouse, and the girls an equal number on the south side. The back seat was the place of honor and seniority, and the next seat, most preferred, was the long seat flanking the floor and stove.

There were five of us from the Old Squire's that morning. Halstead, however, had gone on in advance. As the distance was considerable and the road snowy we carried a lunch basket which was generally in charge of Theodora. Catherine and Thomas Edwards had come to go with us, also Edwin and Elsie Wilbur, and the two Murch boys, Willis and Ben, who lived farther along our road. Octavia Sylvester and Adriana Darnley, Newman's sister, joined us near the schoolhouse door.

A tremendous hubbub of voices was heard inside. Disputes concerning seats were running high. Our Halstead, Alfred Batchelder and Billy Glinds had got possession of the long seat on the boys' side, and were holding it against all comers. Newman Darnley and Absum Glinds were threatening to eject them. A scuffle appeared certain. Several other disputes were passing the argument stage.

Altogether forty-seven scholars had arrived. Thomas and I pushed for a bench next to the back seat, got into it and put our books on the desk, in sign of possession. We dared not leave it, however, and sat there for some time holding the fort.

It was past nine o'clock, and thus far no one of us had seen or heard anything of the new teacher; but now suddenly above the din of contention a jingle of bells was heard outside, and Ned Wilbur cried, "The master's coming! Here he is!"

A lively scramble followed, and those who had not secured seats took what was left, grumbling angrily; but the most of us had our eyes fixed on the door.

It opened and the new master walked in.

CHAPTER II

"THE IMPORTANT MAN"

EVERY eye was on him. Truth to say, he was a handsome fellow, nearly six feet tall, of fine form and strong. His face was fresh and ruddy, his hair abundant, curly and black. On his upper lip a faint black mustache was beginning to show and gave him a youthful appearance, despite his size and weight.

Handsome was the word for him, externally at least, and shy looks of admiration showed on the faces of Adriana, Octavia and other large girls in the back seat. Hitherto our schoolmasters had not been remarkable for good looks, but this was a handsome one. He wore a stylish, dark suit and was of the type of young men who set off their clothes well.

First impressions are sometimes quite erroneous, but it seemed to us boys that his glance around was hard and morose. He appeared sullen and disdainful, as if displeased at the start, and his first words were, as he laid his books and a very large ruler on the desk, "I don't want to hear another such a noise when I come into this house. If I do, there'll be trouble for somebody."

It was not a gracious remark to open school with, but there was justice in it; the most of us felt it so. The noise had been outrageous, but it was still enough now. He began to take off his overcoat, and thereupon Addison went down to the desk, bade him good-morning and showed him the two pegs always reserved for the master's hat and coat. "We do not often have

such a noise," Addison then said apologetically, as he took his seat.

It was but common courtesy to a stranger in our schoolhouse, but the new master stared at Addison in a suspicious way, without even saying good-morning in response. But no doubt he was somewhat uncertain, or embarrassed, and too much on his guard. He had just come from an interview with Tibbetts and Glinds; and it is likely that the rum-seller had not given many of us a good character.

After removing his coat, Master Lurvey advanced to the stove and holding his hands to the warmth, ran his eyes slowly around the room again.

"Well, you all mean to know me the next time you see me, I guess," said he at length. "You seem to like the looks of me, by the way you stare."

No doubt we were all watching him rather more attentively than true politeness warrants. With this hint the most of the scholars took up their books.

"Oh, you needn't begin to study just yet," said he. "I've got something to say to ye before we begin lessons."

Thereupon we laid our books down and tried to sit without looking at our new master, since he resented our regards. He stepped up behind his desk, took up his ruler and began in a set tone of voice to make us an address which, evidently, he had thought over in advance.

"I don't doubt," he went on, after a little pause, "that you all want to have a good school. I want you to have a good school, too. The first thing to have is good order. I shall make such rules as I think you ought to have, and when I make a rule I expect you all to obey it prompt — promptly," he added.

"If any boy here thinks he can get around a rule I make, he will find out his mistake quick. Order is the first thing, and order I'll have if I have to ferule ten boys a day.

"When I give out a lesson, too, I expect that it will be learned, right off, that day. I shall give only such lessons as I think suitable.

"I shall not expect that you will all be running to me to do sums for you in school hours, or here in the schoolroom. I've seen enough of that sort of thing. It isn't the teacher's business to do hard sums in school hours. If you have hard sums that you cannot do, after you have tried them for two or three days, fetch them to me at night, when school is dismissed. If I have time I'll take them home with me and do them for you, and will hand them to you done on paper. Then I shall expect you to look them over and explain them to the others. But don't you think that I have come here to do hard sums for you all the time, for I haven't. I'm here to give you your lessons and hear them."

It would be difficult to describe the harsh and defiant tone in which these remarks were delivered to us. It was evident that the new master was resolved to govern us strictly, and also that he had a distaste for hard sums.

"Generally," he continued, after pausing for a while to give his words time to take effect in our minds, "generally I shall have you read in the Testament, mornings, and I want you all to read up loud and plain. But this morning I will read part of a chapter myself, so you can see how I want you to read."

He then took a Testament from his books and read to us a portion of the fifth chapter of John, wherein is described the miracle of healing the impotent man. He read loud and slow, with long pauses. We noticed that he pronounced the word impotent as *important*. Many of the forty or more pupils probably did not know the difference. I recall being in doubt myself, yet it occurred to me that I had never heard of an "important man" in the Gospels.

The mistake would probably have passed as a slip

of the tongue; but our young instructor saw fit to comment on what he had read, after he closed the book. "You all see," said he, "that this was an *important* man. That's why so much is said about him. That's why he was healed. He was a very *important* man."

I knew now that something was wrong and glanced at Theodora. She blushed and sat looking very uncomfortable. I saw her steal a look toward Addison, but that pledged ally of the schoolmaster was gazing steadfastly at his hands. A curious kind of hush pervaded the room.

The master put away his Testament and looked around on us again. "You heard me read," he remarked. "That's the way I want you to read. Readin' is the most important thing in school. So first of all this morning, I'm going to call out the class in the Fifth Reader. All who read in the Fifth Reader come to the front seats. I want to see what kind of readers you are, and whether you know the rules of readin', or not."

As many as twenty of us found our Readers and ranged ourselves on the front seats, facing the floor and the master's desk.

"I want to hear one of you read," said he. "This young lady right in front of me — she looks as if she thought she could read. I'll hear her."

He opened the Reader to a selection, called *A Plea for Blennerhassett,* and named the page. "Read the first section," said he.

The "young lady" whom he had selected chanced to be Catherine Edwards, one of the best readers in the school. She flushed a little at being addressed in a manner so pointed, but immediately complied with the request, reading fluently and well, as any good reader would.

"There! That's about what I thought. Just about what I expected," commented the master in a tone far from flattering to Catherine. "That's the way you've

been reading here, I suppose. Runnin' on like that; no regard for yer stops; no regard for the rules of readin'. Young lady, do you know what the rules of readin' are?"

Catherine was much embarrassed. "Why, yes," said she. "I think I do, but I'm afraid I do not quite understand what you mean, Mr. Lurvey."

"Oh, yes, yes, I thought so. I thought you didn't know," said the master. "I knew ye didn't. Now listen to me. I'll teach ye something. After a comma, stop long enough to count one. After a semicolon, stop long enough to count two. After a colon, stop long enough to count three. After a period let yer voice fall and stop long enough to count four. The whole class now, repeat the rules of readin' after me."

We all repeated the above "rules," after our teacher, sentence by sentence.

"Now, young lady, read that section again and read it according to rule," said the new master.

"But is that really necessary, Mr. Lurvey?" Catherine ventured to ask. "If the voice is allowed to fall at a period, and a new sentence is properly begun, isn't that enough?"

"What do you suppose rules are for?" exclaimed the master in a loud, harsh tone. "Let the voice fall and stop long enough to count four — every time."

Catherine was a spirited girl and resented the tone in which she was answered. "Certainly, Mr. Lurvey," she replied. "The only reason why I asked, was that our teacher last winter instructed us differently."

The master slapped his book down on the desk. "Now look here!" he exclaimed, "I don't care what the teacher last winter did! Maybe he didn't know his business. I don't know and don't care. I teach by rule and I want you to go by rule. Next may read."

The next chanced to be Theodora who sat with Catherine. She also was a good reader. But she now

attempted to make pauses, according to "rule," and her section consequently seemed to pause and hop along so oddly that we all laughed. No one could help laughing.

The master flushed. "Silence!" he shouted in a tremendous voice. "What are you laughing at? That's the way to read," he asserted stoutly. "Slowly and distinctly and accordin' to rule; only of course you needn't be quite so slow, counting four, as that last young lady was. Count four right off smart, as if you had some life in you."

He went on lecturing us and spent fully an hour that morning drilling a class of good readers in the practice of pausing long enough to count four after every sentence!

After the Fifth Reader, the Fourth, Third and Second were called out and put through the same drill.

The class in the National Arithmetic was next called. It consisted of Addison, Theodora, Catherine, Myra Batchelder and two others. They had been through the book the previous winter and wished merely to review it. The new master did not even inquire as to their progress, but opening the book hastily, assigned as their next day's lessons, the two rules for Reduction Ascending and Reduction Descending.

"Learn those two rules by heart," said he and shut the book.

Addison now ventured to say to him pleasantly that they knew these rules in principle, and could give them in substance, if called for, at any time.

"Now, I don't want to hear any such excuses as that," replied the master. "That is just an excuse to shirk studyin'. We are going to do thorough work here this term. You've got to learn every rule by heart, or I will keep you on it till you do. There's nothing like having rules by heart. At the end of the term I shall call for all these rules and every one of you must be able to give any rule that I call for by

heart. I am going to beat the rules of this Arithmetic into you so that you never'll forget 'em if you live to be as old as Methuselah."

"But Mr. Lurvey," said Catherine who had not yet recovered her equanimity, "they would perhaps have a different kind of Arithmetic by that time."

"Now look here, young lady!" exclaimed the master, "I don't want any more nonsense from you. When I am speakin', I don't expect to be broke in on by anybody. When I want scholars to speak to me, I will let them know it. The next time any one interrupts me like that, they'll be sorry for it."

He looked around upon us in a very determined, not to say savage, manner; and it was plain to see that he fully meant what he said. Catherine sat regarding him with mingled indignation and fear. It was not an auspicious opening for a pleasant term. Our new master appeared to regard us as his enemies. Catherine and Theodora were good scholars who wished to be on the best of terms with the teacher and aid him in all respects; they rarely or never needed even to be cautioned as to their deportment, and naturally were aggrieved to be treated so rudely.

When the lower class in the Practical Arithmetic — my own class — was called, the master gave us the same two rules in Reduction which had been assigned to the higher class in the National. "They are important rules," said he. "Learn them by heart for to-morrow."

When school was dismissed for the noon intermission of one hour, Addison again approached the new master and, mentioning to him that his boarding place was to be with us, offered to escort him thither, and they went away together. Certain of the others also went home.

We who remained then opened our lunch baskets and while refreshing ourselves compared notes, so to speak, in a quiet way. At length I ventured to ask

Catherine how she liked the new master. She did not reply for some time, but merely glanced at me. "If you want to know what I think," she said at last, in a low tone, "I think he is a great rude fellow. I don't think he knows much, either." My cousin Ellen agreed with her. Theodora would not express an opinion. She said there were some advantages in learning rules "by heart;" it strengthened the memory. But Catherine made sport of such rules. Between them, she and cousin Ellen had quietly christened the new master "the important man." Theodora was so much disappointed that she took but a small share of the lunch. She had hoped to make fine progress during this term. Addison and she expected to go on with algebra, in which they had made a beginning under Master Pierson.

On the other hand, Adriana Darnley and Octavia Sylvester were much impressed by our new master's appearance. "Oh, but isn't he fine lookin'!" Adriana went about saying to all of us. "We never had such a handsome schoolmaster before. He's real stylish-lookin'." Octavia agreed with her. "I wish he boarded at our house," said Adriana, — overhearing which Catherine and Ellen exchanged wondrous-wise glances.

At one o'clock Addison and the new master returned, and in the afternoon we were again drilled in reading by "rule." Afterwards the class in English grammar was called to the recitation seats.

"Now I suppose," said Master Lurvey, "that you've been in the habit here of spending an hour a day, parsing and construin'."

"Yes, Mr. Lurvey," replied Ellen.

"I thought you'd say so," said he with a sneer. "I expect that some young lady" (glancing toward Catherine) "will tell me that the master last winter had you do that. I've been hearing a good deal about that tremendous master, last winter, the tremendous great

Mr. Pierson! But let me tell you all right here that he don't scare me a bit.

"Now, see here, parsin' and construin' is a waste of time, and I shall not waste time on it. So you can carry those parsing books home with you. It's a miserable waste of time. What you want in life is the rules of grammar, and that's what I'm going to give ye. Take Nouns and Pronouns for to-morrow, and see that you have every word of it. Take your seats."

As we did so, I recollect glancing at Addison. His face was a study. Catherine and Theodora looked bewildered. Adriana was trying to have Mr. Lurvey notice that she approved him.

"I suppose there are geography classes," the new master remarked, presently. "Will any one tell me how many?"

"There were three last winter, Mr. Lurvey," said Addison.

"Oh, yes, yes, yes, 'last winter!'" exclaimed the new master with a laugh. "There 'tis again. This school seems to be all 'last winter.' Nothin' but 'last winter.' But you're going to have something different this winter. I shall teach geography on a new plan. This book (Colton and Fitch's) you use here, takes ye flying all over creation and when you get back, you don't know where you are.

"Now, listen; you are going to begin geography with this town you're living in, and then this county, and then this state."

That seemed a rather good idea to me; it sounded practical.

"How many of you know anything about your own State of Maine?" the new master demanded, reproachfully.

The question was so general that no one replied.

"How many of ye know what the largest river in yer own State of Maine is?"

"The Penobscot," said Addison, smiling, and not

to have us all seem too ignorant. "It is said, however, that as much or more water flows in the Kennebec, in a year," he added.

"I didn't suppose you knew," said the master in an overbearing tone. "And no matter about that last part. You're not supposed to know more than your books.

"What is the largest lake in Maine? Perhaps this very bright young lady who knew so much about arithmetic this morning can tell me," he continued with sarcasm, looking at Catherine.

"Moosehead Lake," replied Catherine, indifferently, as one grown weary.

"Oh, you did happen to know that," commented the master. "Do you say it is a large or a small lake?"

"Large," replied Catherine. She cast a sudden keen look at the new master, and to our astonishment, added, "It is the largest body of fresh water in the world!"

We looked for another outburst of sarcasm. But to our still greater astonishment the new master said nothing.

"The lesson to-morrow will be the map of Maine," he announced, after making a note with a pencil. "That's for all three classes."

I stole a glance at Catherine, as we went to our seats. Her eyebrows were arched in a peculiar way. Addison's face wore a curious smile. In my own mind, an odd query was turning itself over: did he know?

Exercises in spelling followed, the master then said, "Lay aside your books." But Addison raised his hand.

"Well, young man, what is it?" said Master Lurvey rather gruffly. "There is one class, sir, that has not yet been called to-day," Addison replied.

"What's that?"

"The class in algebra."

"Did you have a class in algebra last winter, under the great Mr. Pierson?" asked the master ironically.

"We had algebra last winter and the winter before," replied Addison.

"Didn't you know that that was contrary to law?" demanded Master Lurvey. "It's against the law to teach algebra in a common school like this."

"I have heard that a teacher is not obliged to teach algebra unless he is willing," said Addison. "I did not know there was any law forbidding it."

"There are lots of things you don't know," retorted the master. He laughed condescendingly. "Not but that I would be willing enough to teach algebra," said he, offhand. "Fact, I'd like to. But I've been warned not to teach it. The agent warned me not to. I'd like to, but I can't lay myself liable to the law, you know. So we won't have it. Lay aside your books.

"Now, remember what I said about noise here, mornings. When I come into this house to-morrow morning every boy is to be in his seat, every girl, too, with their Testaments out, ready to read.

"Another thing: I've seen some of you whispering in school to-day. No more whispering. You hear that. School is dismissed."

CHAPTER III

SUDDEN DEPARTURE OF MASTER LURVEY

IF the first day of school, under Master Lurvey, had been tumultuous, the second proved even more so. We soon had earnest that his "rule" against whisperers would be enforced. Reading from the Testament had scarcely concluded that morning when he made a sudden rush up one of the aisles to the long back seat and collaring Newman Darnley (who was certainly whispering to his seat-mate) dragged him down the aisle to the open floor of the room. Newman made some feeble efforts at resistance, but was whirled around in a circle, his heels nearly knocking down the stove, then trounced smartly on the floor, shaken nearly out of his jacket and finally shoved back up the aisle and fairly flung into his seat — a much rumpled Newman!

Clearly Master Lurvey was a powerful youth, physically. Moreover, he appeared to enjoy the fracas; his face grew very red, but took on an aspect of glee. As he marched back to his desk, he faced around to the school and said, "I'll serve the next one I catch whispering in the same way!"

This menace was probably directed to the boys, but he was facing the entire room and said, "the next one!" The thought that he might pull out a young lady of sixteen into the floor and shake her as he had shaken Newman astounded us for a time. Addison appeared greatly amused, although he was looking into a book. At the forenoon recess, too, three of the boys having delayed a little in returning indoors after the

bell was rung, Master Lurvey expedited their movements by seizing them, one after another as they appeared in the doorway and throwing them headlong to their seats. The room was very quiet during all the remainder of the day; in fact, we sat in a kind of breathless expectancy waiting some fresh manifestation of the master's rigor in discipline. Although we had our books well in hand, we were not studying exactly, but watching out.

At recess that afternoon Newman, who was much incensed by the trouncing which he had received, declared that he would be one of four to put the master out of the house. William Tibbetts and Edgar Merrill said the same, but Addison dissuaded them.

Alfred Batchelder, generally a bad boy at school himself, perfidiously reported this to the master as we went home from school that night. In consequence of this bit of tale-bearing we witnessed a fresh evidence of the master's prowess the following morning. After reading in the Testament (stopping long enough to count four after every sentence) Master Lurvey remarked that there was a little business to be transacted before beginning lessons. "I understand that three of you talk of carrying me out of school," said he. "If that's so, now is a good time to begin. I'm all ready. Come on now and carry me." He squared himself in the floor and clenched his fist.

No one cared to accept the challenge. I do not think that there were four boys in school who could have put him out of the room. "Well," said he at length, "if you are not going to tackle *me*, I've got a little bone to pick with *you*. Newman Darnley, come out into the floor."

Newman hesitated.

"Start!" shouted the master, "or I'll come after you again."

Newman came out, reluctantly enough, and the master "feruled" him on both hands, very severely;

in fact, he applied the ruler with all his strength. William Tibbetts and Edgar Merrill were then called out in turn and punished in the same manner; both cried out from the pain. Their hands after a few moments puffed up white and became much swollen. It was cruel punishment.

"Does anybody else want to carry me out of school?" demanded the master, exultantly, striding forward past the stove, ruler in hand. Several of the little fellows began to whimper. Then, to our amazement, Catherine Edwards exclaimed, "Yes, I do. I think you are a hateful tyrant!"

The master rushed toward her, his eyes blazing with rage. We all thought he was about to strike her. If he had done so, there would have been a general *emeute*. I think that we would all have fought him, tooth and nail. Kate was as white as paper. She was wofully frightened. Afterwards she said that she hardly knew how she came to say what she did. She faced the master, however, with a species of desperation in her eyes, and he evidently thought it better not to attempt her chastisement.

"You sassy piece!" he growled and turning, went back to his desk, where he made a number of marks in his record, saying, "I'll give you the lowest rank in school."

During the last two days of the week our rigorous instructor developed a very unpleasant habit of using his foot on the floor to enforce his orders. If any pupil did not start, or reply, instantly when spoken to, he would stamp with his foot so heavily as to jar the whole house. He heard lessons quickly, spending very little time upon them, and rarely asking a question concerning them. During most of the time he sat watching us, evidently to surprise some one in the act of breaking a "rule." No one dared ask him a question, much less carry a "hard sum" to him. He had terrorized us.

Joel Pierson, while boarding at the Old Squire's the previous winter, had been very genial with the young folks, and assisted them with their studies, in the sitting-room, during the long evenings. Master Lurvey held himself aloof and scarcely spoke to us at home, nor we to him.

I overheard Theodora talking of the school to Addison Friday evening; she was lamenting that we bade fair to make no progress.

"Yes, he is a pill," Addison replied; "but I guess we shall have to make the best of him."

The fact was that many of the parents in the district had gained an idea that Master Lurvey must be a pretty good teacher, because he had feruled the boys who talked of putting him out of the house. He was no doubt aware that he was incompetent to teach scholars like Theodora, Catherine or Addison; but he knew that he possessed the brute strength to repress anything like rebellion, and he resolved to rule by the strong arm and keep us in fear of him. He was sufficiently coarse in disposition to enjoy the exercise of his absolute power. I never saw so quiet a schoolroom as ours during Friday and Saturday that week, — for we had a holiday in our district school only on every second Saturday of the term.

On Saturday our new master began to display another odd trait. When any one of us in the classes recited, or made even a simple statement of a rule, or a fact, he now called out, "Sure of that, sir?" or "Do you know that is so?"

He was, in truth, far more ignorant of dates, the names of capital cities, the location of countries, and of historical events, than we suspected, but he was crafty about committing himself to any statement of his own, until he had looked in the book.

One of the town School Committee usually visited the schools twice each term, once during the opening week and once near the end of the term. We looked

for the " committee man " on Thursday and on Friday. It then transpired that Glinds, the school agent, had neglected to notify the Committee that the term had begun.

The second week opened with little change for the better. It was Master Lurvey's first taste of the sweets of absolute power, and he was of the stuff that Neroes and Caligulas are fashioned from; he enjoyed witnessing the fear that he inspired. Very likely it was his idea of a well-governed school — where every pupil jumped at the master's nod and listened, when he spoke, in awed expectancy.

Addison alone had preserved his ordinary easy demeanor, attending to his studies without much reference to the master, but addressing him whenever he desired. Addison, indeed, was never disorderly in school; he was much too busy with his books. He alone of us all would now raise his hand to attract the master's attention and then address him in ordinary tones during school hours. Although Master Lurvey must have been aware that Addison was the most friendly to him of any one in the room, it soon began to be apparent that he did not like to see even Addison unterrified. Perhaps he deemed him a bad example to the others. Be that as it may, he determined to humble him and watched for a pretext to do so. In the utter quiet of the room he could hear the least whisper in any part of it, and while sitting in his desk Tuesday afternoon, the sound of communicating lips reached his ear from the direction of the long seat where Alfred, Halstead and Addison now sat. Picking up his ruler he strode along in front of that seat and looking at Addison, said, " Were you whispering? "

" No, sir," replied Addison.

" I think I heard you! " exclaimed the master.

" I repeat that I was not whispering," replied Addison firmly.

The fact was that Halstead had whispered to Addison but the latter had not replied.

"Somebody whispered here!" shouted the master. "Was it you?" pointing his ruler at Halse.

I regret to say that my kinsman could not always, under pressure, be relied on to tell the truth.

"No, sir," replied Halse.

"Was it you, then?" demanded the master, pointing at Alfred.

"No, it was not," said Alfred. "I haven't whispered this week."

"Who was it then?" asked the master.

"I don't know," said Alfred. "I did not hear anybody."

This may have been falsehood number two.

"One of you three has lied to me!" cried the master in a loud tone; "and I think it is you!" pointing at Addison.

"You are entirely mistaken, Mr. Lurvey. I have not broken a rule of your school thus far," rejoined Addison, with great distinctness.

"Then which of those two boys did whisper?" exclaimed the master, pointing at Halse and Alf.

"It is not my business to spy on, or report, other scholars," replied Addison, with great spirit. "I do not think you have any right to ask me to do it. I will be spy and informer to no teacher."

This resolute attitude nonplussed the inexperienced master somewhat; he was staggered by the firm stand which Addison took on the question and did not press that point.

"I'll find out some way who whispered here," he exclaimed wrathily, and turning walked to his desk and for a long time sat there staring hard at Addison again. Theodora and I, all the scholars, in fact, were also looking furtively at Addison. He was a little flushed, but I did not see that he smiled. Mr. Lurvey appeared to think differently, however; for he sud-

denly strode toward him again and shook his fist at him. "Don't you grin at me!" he exclaimed, at shouting pitch. "I still think you are the one who whispered. If I find out you did, I'll ferule you till you can't get your hands to your head! I'll take that grin off your face!"

Addison did not change countenance; he looked the master in the eye as he uttered his threat, and said, "Very well, Mr. Lurvey."

We expected that the master would collar him for that, but for some reason he did not. Addison resumed his algebra (which he was taking without assistance, at odd hours, and kept very busy during the rest of the afternoon.

After school that night Newman Darnley again sounded Addison as to whether he would join a party to put the master out of the house by force, but Addison strongly advised them to mind the rules of school and give up that project. He would not let them know that he resented the master's language, but Theodora and I knew him well enough to feel pretty sure that Mr. Lurvey would live to regret his threat.

The master did not speak to any of us that night, and the Old Squire noticed that something had gone wrong, although none of us had said anything concerning the school at home. Next morning as I was pumping water at the barn, the old gentleman asked me privately if the master had taken offense at anything.

"He is pretty savage with us all," I replied, but did not like to tell him of Addison's trouble.

"Savage, is he?" said the Old Squire, with a chuckle; he still held old-time ideas about order in the schoolroom.

About twelve o'clock the following night, Master Lurvey was taken very ill. Gram heard him crying out dolorously and set herself to care for his ailment. At length, she judged it necessary to administer an

emetic of mustard and water, the result of which gave evidence that her patient had been partaking very freely from a sack of dried apple which hung in the passage, leading to his room. In consequence of this imprudent refreshment, he not only came near expiring *intra dies*, from congestion of the stomach, but was unable to appear at breakfast, or go to the schoolroom till near eleven o'clock.

Not knowing when our tyrant might appear on the scene, however, we all repaired to the schoolhouse at the usual hour, and after waiting awhile, Catherine proposed that Addison should keep school till the master came. To this all agreed. Addison, however, declined; but the others insisting, he at length called the school to order and laid himself out to do his best. For awhile he kept a bright eye out at the window for Mr. Lurvey's approach, intending to take his seat before the master should come in. But there were numbers of hard examples to be worked in arithmetic, and Addison solved several, one after the other on the blackboard. Presently he became absorbed in his task and was cyphering away at the board on a tough example in Cube Root, explaining it as he did so in a loud, clear voice, when the door opened softly and in walked Master Lurvey, looking far from well and decidedly sour. How long he had been listening outside, no one could say. Instead of enjoying Addison's confusion and thanking him for the pains he was taking, he seemed far from pleased and his first words were, "So you think you can take my place, do you?"

Addison brushed the chalk off his fingers. "No, Mr. Lurvey," said he. "I should never try to take your place.

"I was only doing a few examples for some of the scholars, while we waited," he added, seeing that the master's face was growing very black. He started to go to his seat, but Mr. Lurvey suddenly stepped in front of him. "You seem to think that you can do

just as you've a mind to here!" he cried in an angry tone. "You think you can set yourself up for a pattern for me to keep school by! A big schoolmaster you would make! Let's see now how you would look. Take a seat in the desk. I want them all to look at ye!"

For an instant Addison flushed and looked rebellious. I think that he was half minded to resist. If he had done so every boy in the room would have sprung to assist him. Whether we could have overcome the master is uncertain. He was a powerful youth. Muscle was his one strong point. "Take your seat in my desk!" he shouted, advancing on Addison, while the rest of us sat breathless.

It had taken Addison but that one moment to think twice and rise above his first rash impulse.

"Why, certainly, Mr. Lurvey," he replied in a cordial tone, "if you think we need two teachers here. But you are so well able to govern a school that I never thought of our needing another." He went to the desk and took the master's seat there, and then looked around at us all with a queer smile.

"That is the great schoolmaster!" exclaimed Mr. Lurvey, pointing at him in derision. "Isn't he a big one?"

We laughed, but rather at the master than at Addison who laughed, too; the master himself had put on a grin, for Ad's ambiguous compliment to him on his ability to govern the school had pleased him and disarmed his temper somewhat.

"Do you want me to hear classes?" Addison asked after a few moments. "If I am going to be the master's assistant, I should like to make myself useful."

"If I want you to do anything, I'll tell you," replied Mr. Lurvey gruffly; he then called out a class in arithmetic and began to drill us on the verbatim recitation of rules again. Addison took up a book and read. After every few minutes, the Master would turn around

and point at him, saying, "He thinks he's the schoolmaster." The joke was rather weak.

At the noon intermission Addison quietly withdrew from the desk and nothing more was said, but this affair had wounded his feelings even more than the previous threat to ferule him, and I think that from that moment he began to plot the master's downfall. Addison, however, was naturally a strategist and possessed the strategist's instinct to work quietly and to attack an enemy at his weak point. For that reason he would have nothing to do with any plan for carrying the master out of the schoolroom. He said nothing to the others and gave no hint of his intention.

School proceeded far from pleasantly all day, perhaps because the master was not yet feeling very well. He was more than usually fractious and overbearing with us. "Is that so?" he would exclaim after nearly every answer which we gave in the classes. "How do you know that is so?" or "Give your reasons for that?" He even asked this latter question when Ellen said that Pekin was the capital of China! She replied that she did not know any reason, and he bade her be prepared to give a reason at next recitation.

When in the history class Newman Darnley replied that John Adams was the second President of the United States the master cried, "Are you sure of that?"

"Pretty sure," said Newman. "Why?" said the master.

"Because George Washington was the first and John Adams came next," replied Newman.

The master looked in the book. "You are not half as bright as you think you are," said he. "George Washington was the second President and the first President, too; he was President twice."

This was so fine a point that Addison as well as the rest of us laughed, and the master shouted, "Silence!" — in an awful voice and stamped on the floor.

Next afternoon, about half an hour after school began, one of the School Committee appeared, to visit the school. In our town there was then a School Committee consisting of three members to either one of whom an applicant for the position of teacher might apply to be examined, and obtain a certificate as to fitness. As is often the case in country towns, men were occasionally elected to the office who were not wholly competent to properly examine proposing teachers and who did so in a very superficial manner. One such person was on the board that year and it was from him that Master Lurvey had obtained his certificate to teach. But the member of the Committee who came to visit the school that day was the Congregationalist clergyman at the village, Mr. Lowell Furness, a young gentleman not more than twenty-four years of age, of good education and talented.

Mr. Furness had been in town but two years; he was elected on the Committee the previous spring and made chairman of the board, it being understood that he was better qualified than his fellow members. His personal appearance was unusually attractive; he was gentlemanly and had an animated, cheery way of speaking.

Having hitched his horse outside, he came in without rapping; and as he was a stranger to us all and to the teacher, he introduced himself and stated his business there, in a very genial happy manner. "I would like to hear the most of the classes," said he, "in order that at my second visit, near the end of the term, I may be able to judge of the progress made."

He conversed pleasantly with Master Lurvey for some moments; the latter then called the arithmetic classes, in order, one after another. When we of the more advanced class took our places, Mr. Furness inquired of each what progress we had made the previous winter, and asked a few questions. "Why, this ought to be a pretty good class," he said to the master.

"All they need is a review of the arithmetic. I should have them advance rapidly over the principal rules, dwelling on the more difficult ones only."

The master said something about learning the rules and showed him where he had given lessons in Reduction and Common Fractions.

"Well, that may be of some advantage," replied Mr. Furness doubtfully. "But I would not keep them back there long. This is a class that can go ahead. This class can master everything in the book this term."

It was plain that Master Lurvey did not like this advice very well; he did not reply to it.

The Fifth Reader class was presently called for a brief exercise. Catherine sat at the head of the class, and at a nod from Mr. Furness, she rose and read a section from the reading lesson for that day; and she took particular pains to stop *long enough to count four* at every period. As she read Mr. Furness at first appeared amused, then perplexed.

"Why, you read correctly," he said, when she had finished, "but why do you stop so long at every sentence?"

"So as to count four," replied Kate in a demure and melancholy tone.

Mr. Furness burst into a hearty laugh. "When did you take that up!" he exclaimed, still laughing.

"On the first day of this term," replied Kate, with sadness.

Mr. Furness rose hastily from his seat and walked to the window. We could see that he was still shaking, as he looked out. After a time he came back and, clapping his hand kindly on the master's shoulder, said in a low voice, "My dear young fellow, rules are good things, no doubt, but many of them are somewhat antiquated. It isn't best to insist upon them too closely."

But the master had grown very glum and morose

by this time. He muttered something about teaching as he thought best, then abruptly dismissed the class. Mr. Furness regarded him with an inquiring eye for some moments, then begged his pardon if he had said anything to injure his feelings.

The master did not reply, but turned to call a geography class, and there was no more laughter on the part of any one after this; matters had already taken a serious turn, and Addison — the strategist — perceived that his opportunity had come.

The more advanced class in geography had the map of North America for a lesson that day, and Mr. Furness, perceiving that the master was offended, refrained from asking questions. Mr. Lurvey therefore heard the lesson himself.

"Where is Great Bear Lake situated?" he asked Addison, at length.

The latter purposely hesitated an instant, then replied in a rather uncertain manner, that it was situated in British America.

"Sure of that!" exclaimed the master, brusquely.

"Perhaps I was wrong," replied Addison, with seeming candor. "I remember now that it is situated in the southern part of Mexico. Its outlet is the Snake River which flows into the Gulf of Georgia."

This astonishing answer struck amazement to all our minds. We glanced quickly at the master and saw his eyes wandering vaguely over the map of the book which he held in his hand. He did not find it and did not speak for several moments. We perceived instantly that he was all at sea, himself. Addison watched him, his lip curling in a scornful smile; and Mr. Furness glanced first at Addison, then at the master, who, to extricate himself from his dilemma, at once put another question to the next member of the class. Presently he came around to Addison again, and being, I think, a little suspicious that his former answer was not quite what it should have been, he

took care this time to ask him a question which he was himself sure of, or thought that he was.

"Where does the St. Lawrence River rise?" he demanded; and we saw that he had put his forefinger on the Great Lakes.

"In the Great Lakes," replied Addison, "according to this book. But," he added with assured confidence, "it really rises in the Rocky Mountains! The waters find their way by a subterranean passage into Lake Superior. This passage is over a thousand miles long," he continued in a lower, matter-of-fact tone. "It was only recently discovered." Under his breath, he added, so that some of us sitting near him heard, "I discovered it myself."

The master looked at him hard, but helplessly. He did not like to acknowledge his ignorance of something which Addison and Mr. Furness might know to be a fact, and he was so illy informed that he did not know that Addison's burlesque answer was absurd and impossible. Determined at least not to commit himself he hurried on to the next question. By this time Catherine had divined what the game was to be; when her turn came next, she replied with a serene countenance that the Colorado River emptied into Great Salt Lake! — and we all saw the master looking in British America for it. He did not find it, and abruptly assigning a lesson for the next day, dismissed the class.

By this time Mr. Furness' face wore an aspect of intense dissatisfaction, but he leaned back and made no comment; he knit his brows occasionally, but a smile appeared to be hiding at the corners of his mouth.

The last class called was the class in United States History. We had begun the term with the chapter treating of the causes of the Revolutionary War, and that afternoon had for our lesson the one describing the campaign in the Carolinas and Georgia, also the chapter following it. One of the text books was handed to Mr. Furness by either Theodora or Cath-

erine, but the master put the questions as set down at the margin of each page.

Presently the question, "What American officer took command in the Southern States?" came to Addison.

"General Lincoln," he replied.

"Sure of that?" demanded the master, for he had his eye on the paragraph and was therefore sure himself.

"Very sure," Ad replied, smiling; then bethinking himself that the given name of this officer was not set down in our school history, he added boldly, "It was Abraham Lincoln, the same who was afterwards President of the United States!" Mr. Lurvey looked hard at him, but did not dare to dispute it. He was ignorant to this gross extent.

"Seems to me that he must have become a very old man in 1860," remarked Mr. Furness, regarding Addison with a strange smile.

"Yes, sir," replied Addison with a smile equally strange. "That is why his face always looks so deeply wrinkled — on account of his great age."

Mr. Furness cast a glance of pity at the master who stood regarding them both in angry perplexity. He was out of his depth, and really did not know what to make of it.

"Name some of the advantages of the French alliance?" was the next question. Theodora answered at considerable length, speaking of Lafayette, and of the French fleet and French army which were despatched to assist the Americans.

"Who can name any other advantage?" the master asked.

Addison raised his hand and said with a semblance of gravity, "One other great advantage was that the gay French officers taught the American ladies how to waltz and thus kept up their spirits through a gloomy period of the War. Another advantage was that in

battle they could give orders in French which the British could not understand."

These manifest advantages pleased Mr. Furness so much that he again made an excursion to the window, ostensibly to see if his team was standing quietly, but Master Lurvey appeared to be considerably struck by the cogency of these suggestions.

The last question of the lesson was to name the principal battles of the Revolution. Thomas Edwards did so, and Mr. Furness, rising to take his coat and hat, remarked that *Brandywine* was an odd name for a battlefield. "Can any one tell why it was thus called?" he asked.

"Because," said Thomas, who also wanted to distinguish himself in the farce, "because on that occasion the British drank wine and the Americans brandy. That was before the Maine Law. The Americans took so much brandy that they were defeated in that battle. Washington paced his room all the following night. 'Oh, my bleeding country!' he cried, 'but don't let it happen again!'"

This was too broad even for Master Lurvey; he stamped his foot and bade Tom behave himself, intimating that he would settle with him after school. Mr. Furness made no comment, further than to remark that he saw that it was already past four o'clock, and that he hoped that we would excuse him for keeping us after school hours.

"I wish to see the school agent, to make a few inquiries as to the length of the term, etc.," he added; "and as I am a stranger in your district, will one of you boys kindly point out the way to his house?"

"I will do so," said Addison, and taking his hat and coat went out with him, while the rest of us lingered to lay aside our books and be dismissed in the regular order.

Mr. Furness and Addison were driving away from the schoolhouse as we came out, and as soon as they

were fairly on the road and out of ear-shot (so Ad told us that evening) the young clergyman turned to him and asked, "What sort of a master have you got here?"

"Well, I am only a scholar," replied Addison, "but if you desire my opinion of Master Lurvey, I will give it."

"I would like your opinion of him," said Mr. Furness.

"Well, then, he is as ignorant as a horse and even more of a brute," replied Addison.

"That is a strong opinion," observed Mr. Furness, with a smile; "but from what I have seen, this afternoon, I am much inclined to accept it. At least, I am quite sure that he is unfit for the position."

Shortly after we had arrived home from school, Mr. Furness and school agent, Glinds, drove up and went into the house. Addison, Halse and I were busy with our night chores, but Theodora came out to inform us that they were holding a conversation with Master Lurvey in the sitting-room, behind closed doors.

"His goose is cooked," Ad exclaimed.

After some time Mr. Furness came out and drove away. Mr. Glinds also went away, after a talk with the Old Squire.

Nothing was said that evening, but next morning Master Sam Lurvey set off for home on foot, without saying anything to any one.

During the day, Saturday, it transpired that the committee and the agent had advised him to withdraw quietly from the school, and that he had probably gone home to consult his father.

We saw no more of him till Monday morning, when Mr. Lurvey senior, appeared with his promising son. We had repaired to the schoolhouse before nine o'clock, as usual, and were all in our seats, when at a quarter past, they drove up to the door. Master Sam then

entered (while his father sat outside in the sleigh) and called the school to order. Instead of proceeding with the classes, however, he made us a pompous speech in which he asserted that he had just received an offer to go into business, so much more lucrative than school teaching that he had accepted it at once. Consequently, we would be obliged to get a new teacher. "My time is worth too much to me, to spend it in a school like this, at seventeen dollars a month," he added.

Without further farewell he took his books, walked out to his father's sleigh and they drove off.

Something that sounded very much like three groans followed him as soon as he was fairly outside the door. From the windows we saw that he heard them and that he shot a malignant look back at us; — and that was the last we saw of Master Sam Lurvey.

Theodora said that she pitied his father, but the most of us young folks wasted very little pity on father or son.

CHAPTER IV

MASTER JOEL PIERSON

WE went home from the schoolhouse that Monday morning with our books and baskets of uneaten lunch, elated, but in a very uncertain, disturbed state of mind. School had terminated in so doubtful a manner that none of us knew what to think of it. Theodora could hardly refrain from shedding tears. "It is all the chance we have in a whole year to go to school," she lamented. "And now I am afraid we shall have no more school. I wanted so much to get a good start this winter. I am fifteen and know hardly anything."

"Well, I am glad that Lurvey has gone!" exclaimed Catherine fervently. "I would rather study alone at home than have such a master! I wish Addison would keep school awhile."

"But he is scarcely older than we are and in the same classes with us," said Theodora.

"But he knows more, all the same, and he has such a nice way. Addison!" she called back to him, for the boys were coming on a little behind Theodora and Catherine. "Addison, we are going to elect you schoolmaster!"

"Not if I know it!" replied Addison. "I want to go to school myself. Besides, I helped keep school one forenoon, you know; I didn't enjoy it."

"I guess you enjoyed it as well as Mr. Lurvey did, yesterday afternoon," replied Catherine, laughing. "Oh, that repaid me for all the hateful snubs that fellow has put on us. And did you see Mr. Furness,

laughing to himself? At first he did not understand it, but when he perceived what was going on, the corners of his mouth began to twitch. When Addison explained why Abraham Lincoln looked so careworn, I know he wanted to shout. He hurried to the window."

"But now we shall have no school at all," repeated Theodora mournfully.

"Oh, we shall get another teacher," said Addison.

"What say to getting up a strong petition to have Joel Pierson again?"

"That would be good, but you know he is at Bates College," Catherine remarked. "The term there does not close till Christmas."

"Well, we can wait. Let's all go in for it," Addison said. "Let's get up a petition to have him come back here.

"Of course, Joel was a little peculiar," Addison continued, "but he is a good teacher, well-informed on a great many subjects, and you know he brought maps and pictures for the schoolroom. What nice talks he used to give us, too!"

"I will carry a petition around for names in the district, if you will draw one up," replied Catherine.

"It's a bargain," said Addison. "Let's see, how shall we word it. What say to this? — *'Now that our school has terminated in an unsatisfactory manner, we, the undersigned, believe that it would be well to wait a few weeks and secure the services of Mr. Joel Pierson as teacher.'*"

"That's good," cried Catherine and Theodora.

"Well, then, you call over at our house to-morrow morning and I will have the petition ready," Addison said. "We will all sign it, and I will write a letter this very night to Joel and ask him to take the school. I don't believe Glinds can refuse, after what has happened, if we all go in strong for Joel again."

The petition was drawn up and during the after-

noon, Tuesday, Catherine circulated it, securing the names of fully three-fourths of the people in the district.

Two days later Addison received a letter from Mr. Pierson, stating that, although he had had the offer of three other schools, he would prefer to teach ours again, since we were all desirous of it.

Tibbetts had said nothing, and Agent Glinds wrote to arrange the matter of wages with Master Pierson. Higher wages we knew would have necessarily to be paid him, and the school would be shortened in consequence. Joel Pierson was a young man who had his own expenses to defray at college, and he was known to look out sharply for good wages. We had supposed that he might be willing to accept thirty dollars per month, that being the sum which had been paid him the previous winter.

A day or two later, however, Glinds called to consult with the Old Squire, having received a letter from Pierson, stating that thirty-eight dollars per month with board was the lowest sum which he would be willing to accept, since he had already received an offer of a little more than that. At this rate, with other expenses, there was school money enough for only about eight weeks, and the most of the people, Glinds said, were unwilling to pay so much.

Addison was present and strongly favored hiring Joel Pierson at his own price, his argument being that a short good school was better than a long poor one. Enough additional money, he urged, might be raised to lengthen the school to eleven or twelve weeks. In his earnestness he almost as good as pledged himself to raise at least thirty dollars extra, and largely on the strength of this, Glinds wrote to engage Joel.

Next day, Addison drew up a subscription paper and, going to the Corners, began canvassing the district, to raise money for the school. He met with indifferent success, however, in fact, no success. Some

rumor of his intention had preceded him, and Tibbetts, always unfriendly, had been forming an opposition party. Not only did he sarcastically decline to contribute anything himself, but he had, Addison learned, been about in advance of him, to dissuade others from doing so, his argument being that this was a scheme to benefit us at the Old Squire's at the expense of the rest of the district.

In consequence, many of the people in that quarter of the district listened but coldly to Addison's appeal, and he came home disheartened. At the dinner table we held an animated consultation as to what it was best to do. There was no doubt that "the folks on our road" (as we commonly spoke of the Edwardses, Wilburs, Murches, Batchelders and Sylvesters) would contribute, but Addison now took the ground that it would not be fair to ask them to do so.

"I am not going to coax them to furnish money to Tibbetts and his clique for schooling," he exclaimed.

Addison, in fact, was greatly disturbed, for he felt that after saying what he had to the agent, to induce him to hire Joel Pierson, he was in a manner bound to raise at least thirty dollars, and it was by no means easy to raise thirty dollars among young folks, in those days.

Addison tore up his subscription paper and looked quite the reverse of amiable for a day or two. At the supper table, the second evening, however, he suddenly looked across to the Old Squire and said, "Sir, I am in difficulties and would like to ask a favor of you."

"Certainly," replied the old gentleman with a smile, but not wholly at his ease, for I imagine that he thought Addison might be about to ask him to contribute money.

"Well, sir," said Addison, "you told us yesterday that we must improve these three or four weeks before school begins again to cut and draw the winter's wood pile. Now, sir, are you willing, after we get our own

wood, to let me ask the boys on our road to come and help us chop seven or eight cords of wood in our wood lots? All you will have to furnish us, sir, is the wood on the stump. We will cut it, and then I propose to invite all the boys to ask their fathers for their ox teams, one day, to draw the wood down to market. I hear that we can get four dollars a cord for the wood and get cash. I shall only have to ask you for the use of our oxen and horses for one day."

The Old Squire looked relieved. "That is a very thrifty plan," said he. "I am willing."

If Addison had asked him for the thirty dollars outright, I do not think he would really have refused.

"That is a fine plan of yours, Ad, a splendid plan," Theodora exclaimed. "I wish we girls could help you. I think Tibbetts will feel a little ashamed when he hears that you have worked and earned the money for his boys to go to school."

"Don't you think it!" said Addison. "He isn't the kind of man to have any fine feelings of that sort. He will simply be glad that he has got it out of us for nothing, and brag of it."

"Well, if he does we need not care," said Theodora. "To be that sort of person is the worst kind of misfortune."

"That is a very true remark," said Gram.

"But I don't believe in letting such a man get the advantage, and keep it, and boast of it," exclaimed Addison, resentfully. "He took this course on purpose to spite us, and I will yet square accounts with him."

"You must learn to forgive your enemies, Addison," Gram replied.

The dear old lady was not, to state the entire truth, remarkably quick to forgive enemies, herself, till they had been properly humiliated.

"Oh, I will forgive him, Gram, I will forgive him — afterwards," said Addison, laughing. "But the fact is, that old reprobate needs discipline. He is a

man who is always on the wrong side and carries as many other people with him as he can. His grocery business is and always has been a mere cloak to cover rum-selling. He gives the place a bad name and injures a great many people in this part of the town. In fact, he injures us all. He is a common enemy. Now, Gram, I don't believe in forgiving a man of that stamp, if by forgiving him you mean letting him alone, to do the worst he can."

"No more do I," exclaimed the old lady, firing up suddenly. "He is a mean scamp and ought to be punished!"

The Old Squire burst into a hearty laugh. "Ruth," said he, "there's no doubt, I guess, that Addison is a true grandson of yours."

Next morning the two wood-sleds were got down from the scaffold of the west barn and put together, and new leather brackets nailed to the sled beams, for the axes which were then brought forth from the wood-house and taken to the grind-stone. For an hour or more Halstead and I toiled at turning the stone, while the Old Squire and Addison applied the ax blades to it.

At length all was ready. The oxen were now yoked and we set off for the east wood-lot, Halstead and Addison driving and the Old Squire and I riding on the sleds — first down the lane, across the east field and adown the pasture side to the brook and the Little Sea, and thence on into the woods.

There was now about a foot of snow on the ground, and the morning was bright and cold, so cold that my fingers soon ached inside the woolen mittens with which Gram had provided me, my toes, too, inside my leather boots.

"Thump your feet against the sled beam," the Old Squire said. "Thrash your hands about your shoulders. That will warm them up." He illustrated the process to me and I attempted it with some little success.

Following the "wood road," we entered a mixed growth of yellow birch, beech and rock maple, with occasional large white birches and a few hemlocks.

"Stop the teams. Here is a good place to get our winter's wood," the old gentleman called out. "This old growth has sixty cords to the acre. We will begin with that large birch and fall it down hill. Unhook the oxen and chain them up to those little beeches yonder. Then we will set at work."

Throwing off his coat, he tried the edge of an ax, then beat down the snow about the large birch and planting his feet, lumberman fashion, moistened his palms and struck the first blow — a blow which echoed afar through the frozen woodland.

I had taken an ax myself from a bracket and stood watching him as stroke followed stroke on the trunk of the forest giant, and great white chips began to leap forth from the scarf.

"Where shall I chop?" I asked him. The Old Squire stopped and laughed. "Anywhere, but on your toes," said he. "There is a good tree for you," pointing to a medium-sized white birch about a foot in diameter. "Down with that, my son, and let's see how handsome a scarf you can cut."

Thus exhorted I beat down the snow and essayed to fall my first tree. I had plied the ax on logs previously, but found it far more difficult to chop a scarf in an upright tree trunk. Halstead passed by and derided me, and even the Old Squire himself laughed a little as he observed the droll "scooch" which I gave my body with every blow. "But don't you be discouraged," he said. "Take your time. You will learn. Rest often. I will give you half an hour to fall that tree."

In point of fact I needed the half hour. I can scarcely describe how greatly the effort to cut into a standing tree tired my inexperienced muscles. I could strike but a few blows without stopping.

"Keep at it!" Halstead sang out to me. "You will nigger it down in time!"

Meantime the Old Squire's great birch fell with a prodigious crash and he began chopping up the trunk into logs eight feet long — since that was the length we commonly cut firewood in the wood-lot. Preparing it for the stoves and fire-places was done later in the winter at the house yard.

Now and then as the old gentleman stood erect on the fallen birch trunk — chopping it half off with a perpendicular scarf between his feet, first on one side, then the other — he cast a glance at my tree, to see if it were about to fall, for it leaned in his direction. But after a time he forgot it, I imagine, it was so long falling, and when at last it did go and I shouted to him, he had scanty time to get away.

"Why, you should have given me a little more notice!" he exclaimed. "Never fall a tree upon a man, without giving him ample notice."

"I gave you all the notice I had myself," I replied, humbly. "I thought it never would go."

He began to laugh and came along to look at my scarf, and when he saw the stump, he laughed still more. Addison and Halstead also came to share in the merriment. Instead of being square-cut in two half scarfs, my stump was cut all around, resembling a ragged cone. My chips resembled chankings. Addison surveyed it in silence a moment then said, "That certainly resembles beaver's work." This remark was quite enough to fit Halstead out with another nickname for me; he hailed me about as "the beaver" all the remainder of the week.

After a few days, however, I became able to do nearly or quite as well as he, which, however, was not saying very much; he was but an uncertain and indifferent axman himself.

Addison told me in confidence that night, that he had experienced much the same difficulty in falling

trees when he first came to the farm. "How my left arm ached!" said he. "I knew just how you felt today."

I had next to cut my tree into eight-foot logs. "Let me see your ax a moment," the Old Squire said to me. He then compared the handle with his own and notched a two foot measure on it, so that I could lay off the logs correctly. "Cut them just eight feet from peak to scarf," he bade me, but it was not till I found opportunity to consult with Addison that I quite understood the meaning of that latter phrase.

I found it far easier to cut my tree into logs than to fall it, but I was still farther humiliated by being told that I swung my ax "like an old woman," and several days elapsed ere I caught the knack of properly swinging it high over my shoulder as I delivered the blows.

Next day we had James and Asa Doane to assist us; the latter, however, soon disabled himself on account of cutting his left foot. This accident led to a singular adventure which I shall relate presently. By the end of the second day a passably good wood-road was trodden, and tree after tree was felled, chopped into logs which were then rolled upon the sleds and drawn to the yard before the wood-house door, where four high piles soon grew to towering dimensions. From thirty to forty cords was the quantity usually required to properly warm the old farm-house through the winter and keep the kitchen stove supplied.

CHAPTER V

PROUD-FLESH AND POWDER-POST

A SUDDEN thaw with rain now interrupted our wood-chopping and carried off nearly all the snow. Cold icy weather soon followed, however; but meantime we boys had gone on a singular sort of errand up into the great woods, and became involved in a curious adventure.

The fact was that we now had a very painfully lame sojourner at the Old Squire's, in the person of Asa Doane who had wounded the instep of his foot with an ax the first day he worked with us in the wood-lot. It was a deep cut, and what old people quaintly call "proud-flesh" got into it. The wound refused to heal on account of granulations.

There is a tiny borer which eats seasoned oak wood, boring thousands of minute holes through it till it becomes a mere shell, and turning out a fine white powder, known among country folk as "powder-post." When a shovel or a pitchfork-handle snaps suddenly, or an ax helve or a rake's tail breaks off under no great strain, the farmer says, "'Twas powder-post."

If this small pest obtains lodgment in a barn, or in the oak finish or furniture of a house, it is likely to do a vexatious amount of damage, and no practicable method of checking its ravages has been found. Varnishes do not exclude it. Boiling will kill the borer, but furniture and wainscotings are not easily boiled. From the frames of old buildings, when of oak, powder-post will sometimes run in streams when a beam or brace is struck.

But everything has its virtues, if only they can be found out, and long ago, in New England, some rustic Æsculapius discovered that powder-post was a sovereign balm for all flesh-wounds, causing them to heal rapidly, without proud-flesh. And if proud-flesh appeared, the wound would still heal if it were opened and dressed with powder-post.

What modern medical science would predicate concerning this panacea, I know not, but thousands of cuts, in rural districts, treated with powder-post, did very well, and faith in it waxed strong. So when Asa cut his foot, the old folks declared that the foot must be done up in powder-post. "If it isn't," they said, "proud-flesh will get into it."

It was a bad cut. Asa had been hard at work, when his ax, glancing, had buried the blade in his instep; the very bones were cut. We ran to him, tied a handkerchief round his ankle, and twisted it tight with a stick to ligate it, but blood flowed profusely.

When at last we had helped him home, night was at hand, and no "powder-post" could be found. Several people said, however, that plenty of it could be obtained at an old hay barn up in the great woods. The braces of that barn had been made of cleft red oak, and were powder-posted.

The barn was four miles distant, but next morning Asa's brother James, Willis Murch and the writer set off to go there. James carried an ax with which to split the timbers, and we took along four old newspapers on which to gather up the precious dust, with a bottle in which to put it.

It was a cold morning; the ground was icy and hard frozen, but the sky was calm and bright.

"This is a weather-breeder," the Old Squire remarked at breakfast, and low down on the southern horizon, scarcely visible above the hilltops, was a line of slate-gray cloud.

We set off immediately after breakfast; it was a

good time for hunting; the swamps were frozen and the foliage off the trees. Willis had brought his gun, loaded for deer.

At length we heard a deer run, and followed it for an hour or more. James then espied a hedgehog in a poplar-tree, which Willis shot. The long black-pointed quills were a curiosity to me, but we did not deem such game worth carrying home.

Owing to these delays it was near noon when we reached the clearing, and the sky had become overcast, but as we crossed Stoss Pond brook a new diversion presented itself. The pools were frozen over, but the ice was so transparent that the bottom was plainly visible, and we could see trout lying sluggishly in the deep water. Several of them were fine fish that looked as if they might weigh a pound or more.

James had heard it said that if a gun is fired with the muzzle held just through the ice of a frozen pool the concussion may so stun the fish beneath that they will float up to the under side of the ice. Willis was afraid that this would burst his gun, but the trout looked so alluring that at last he ventured the experiment. James cut a small hole with the ax, and Willis lying down thrust the muzzle of the gun about six inches beneath the ice. Then he edged away, and stretching out his arm at full length pulled the trigger. The gun recoiled, but no apparent damage was done.

For a few moments the water was turbid with the smoke, but when it cleared, there, sure enough, were five or six of the very largest trout floating, belly upward, against the ice. We had but to cut through and take them out, but James was so slow with his ax that two of the trout recovered and darted away.

We had four fine fish to show for the charge of powder, and immediately searched for another pool. We soon came to one much deeper and better stocked with trout, and Willis fired under the ice again. Eight fish were secured here, and going on up the stream we

found still another pool. This time Willis thrust the gun deeper into the water, with the result that about a foot of the barrel was split open!

He and James had words about this accident, for Willis, much chapfallen over the mishap, blamed Doane, and declared that he ought to buy him a new gun.

James now hit upon a stratagem for capturing trout on his own account. Knowing that it was the concussion which stunned the trout he went to the old barn and procured a long board. Using this like a flail, he could strike the ice a blow that made a noise well-nigh as loud as a gun. When just the right sort of blow was given the trout below would turn on their backs and float up to the ice. Two good strings of trout were secured, and by this time Willis thought it best to make peace.

"Come on, boys!" he exclaimed. "We had better be going. It's two o'clock, and beginning to snow."

So engrossed had James and I become in this new method of fishing that we had not heeded the weather. Fine snow was falling already.

"But I must get the powder-post for Ase's foot!" exclaimed James.

"Hurry, then," said Willis, and we ran to the barn. Wooden pins held the oak braces of the frame in position. We knocked out the pins, and prying out two of the braces, split them, and then beat the pieces on the newspapers. The white powder ran from the perforated wood in tiny streams. The bottle filled but slowly, however, and it needed much splitting and hammering to obtain even a teaspoonful of powder-post. Then, at the last moment, Willis spilled nearly all we had collected, and another brace had to be taken out and split.

By this time our newspapers were torn to bits, and altogether we had much trouble in collecting half a bottleful. When at last we corked up the bottle and

hurried out of the barn, a heavy snow storm was raging. We could not even see the woods across the clearing. But we ran as fast as we could, and for fifteen minutes scarcely slackened our pace.

The whole forest had taken on a wintry aspect. The snow rattled on the bare twigs and sodden leaves, and the rising gusts of wind sighed drearily.

"It seems to me that we ought to come to that little hollow where the muck-holes are," James said at length. "I think we're heading off too far toward Stoss Pond."

Thereupon we tacked and, gripping our strings of fish, ran on again, but presently were perplexed to discern the side of a mountain looming up, directly ahead.

"There, now, what did I tell you?" cried James. "That's Stoss Pond Mountain."

Thereupon we tacked again, and ran on.

The storm thickened and the forest darkened, but on we went through brush and thicket till we came to the bank of a large brook.

"We didn't cross any such brook as this on our way up!" James exclaimed.

"We're away down on Stoss Pond brook," said Willis. "We've come wrong! If you both think you know more than I, keep on; I'm going in the other direction," and Willis set off to run again. James and I followed him. In the course of five minutes we came suddenly out into cleared land.

"There! What did I tell you?" cried Willis. "This is Wilbur's pasture. We're almost home now."

James and I were too much gratified to question Willis' apparently superior wisdom and followed after him, intent only on getting home to dinner. The storm was now driving thick and fast. We could not see a hundred yards ahead, but we seemed to be on level ground, such as I had never seen in Wilbur's pasture. Soon we came to another large brook.

"There's no brook in Wilbur's pasture!" exclaimed James, stopping short.

"I don't care!" cried Willis. "This must be Wilbur's pasture!" He crossed the brook.

"Of course it is!" he shouted back to us, "for there's Wilbur's barn ahead of us!"

We hastened after him, and came to a barn about which the storm eddied in snowy gusts.

"But where is Wilbur's house?" asked James.

We looked round in perplexity. There was no house in sight; but here was a barn, and the door was ajar. We went in. It was empty of hay or cattle. The barn looked curiously familiar, but it was not till we perceived the torn newspapers and the pieces of split oak brace on the floor that the full truth dawned on us. It was the old hay barn we had left an hour previously!

We had run five miles through the woods only to reach the place from which we had started! James looked at me and I looked at Willis. A sense of utter bewilderment fell on us. In fact, we were terrified. All hope of dinner, or of reaching home at all that night, deserted us. The storm was increasing; the late November day was at an end. Dusk fell.

For a while we scarcely spoke. The old barn creaked dismally as each gust of wind racked it; loose boards rattled and banged. No created place can be more dreary than an old, empty barn.

After our exertions we soon felt very chilly. We would not have dared build a fire in the barn, even if we had had matches. Willis groped about in the old hay bay and gathered a few armfuls of musty hay, which we spread on the barn floor; and then we lay down as snugly together as we could nestle, but nothing sufficed to warm us, and we lay shivering for what seemed hours.

James and I finally fell asleep, and perhaps Willis did, although he always denied it. At last he waked us, shaking us violently.

"You mustn't sleep!" he exclaimed. "You'll freeze to death and never wake up!

"It's getting terribly cold," he continued. "We'd better get up and jump around."

But James and I did not wish to stir from that one small slightly warmed spot. Our toes and fingers ached. A fine dust of snow sifted down through the cracks on our faces; a gale was raging, and how that old barn creaked!

"I guess it would be warmer under the barn floor," Willis said at last. "There's almost always old dry stuff under a barn floor. If we can lift a plank or two we'll get down there."

"Yes, we had better," quavered James, his teeth chattering. "If we get under the floor the barn will be less likely to kill us if it blows down."

Willis crept to the ends of the floor planks, and tried first one and then another. He found one that could be raised and tipped it over, making an aperture large enough to descend. It was pokerish moving about in the dark, but we thrust down our legs and found that there was dry chaff and hay there. Willis let himself down and felt around, then bade us get down beside him. We snuggled together under the floor, and with our hands banked the old dry stuff about our shivering bodies.

It seemed safer down there, and we felt the wind less, but lay listening to the gusts, more than half expecting with every one to hear the barn fall over us.

Probably we fell asleep after a while, for my next recollection is of coughing chaff, then noticing that it had grown slightly light. The wind appeared to have lulled in part. James, who was in the middle, felt warm as a kitten. I was but half awake, and so cold that I selfishly crept over between him and Willis. That waked James; he began to crawl back over me into the warm spot, but bumped his head against the

barn floor and landed on Willis, who waked in a bad temper.

"What you doing!" he snarled. "Getting the warm chaff all away from my back!"

James thrust out a hand and grasped what he supposed was Willis's hair.

"Where is your old head, anyway!" he exclaimed. "Is *that it?* Your mouth isn't with it, is it?" Willis did not reply; he was falling asleep again.

"Say, Willis, has your mouth got strayed away from your head?" said James.

"Is that your head?" he exclaimed a moment after, speaking to me.

"Keep still, can't you?" I growled. "You've been in the middle all night! I want to go to sleep now."

"Well, by gummy, it isn't his head either!" cried James. "Whose head is that over there?"

"You lie down, Jim," said Willis.

"But there's somebody else here!" cried James, with a queer note in his voice, and he scrambled back over us both. The space was all too narrow for such a maneuver, and his knees felt hard.

"Now, look here," said Willis. "You quit that!"

But James was climbing through the hole to the barn floor above. "You must get out of there!" he cried. "There is something down there."

By this time Willis was fully waked up. He reached over with his hand, on the side where James had been, and then he, too, gave a spring and climbed out on the floor! That alarmed me in turn, and I followed them, bumping my head in my haste. "What is it?" I exclaimed.

"I don't know," said Willis, his voice shaking from cold and excitement.

"He's got an awful thick head of hair," said James, "but he felt warm! Seemed to be all hair!"

"I'll bet it's a bear!" cried Willis. "Denned up, under the floor!"

With that James and I made for the door, but Willis said he did not believe it would come out, if it was asleep for the winter.

For some time we stood near the door, prepared for flight. It was growing light, however, and with the daylight our courage revived. First Willis, then James and I, went back to the hole in the floor and peeped down, but it was too dark to distinguish objects.

Growing bolder, Willis ventured to lift another floor plank over where our strange bed-fellow lay, and even now I seem to see James' dilated eyes, as we looked down on a great round mat of shaggy black hair!

We had now no doubt that it was indeed a bear. Willis lowered the plank gently into its place, and, going outside, we discovered that there was a hole at the far end of the barn where the old stone work under the sill had fallen out.

This discovery excited us so much that we nearly forgot our miserable plight. The bear's skin and the state bounty would be worth sixteen dollars. As Willis' gun was useless, we concluded that the thing for us to do was to run home — if we could find the way — and get assistance.

We had scarcely left the barn when we saw two men come out of the woods. One of them had a gun. As they drew nearer, we perceived that the foremost was Willis' older brother, Ben Murch, and the other Addison.

"They're out hunting for us! Now don't you tell them we got lost!" said Willis, with that guile which is apt to develop in a boy who has older brothers that tease him. "Make them believe we've been guarding this bear all night."

James looked to me and laughed, but Willis did the talking, and when Ben called out to demand why in the world we had not come home, Willis shouted:

"We've got a big bear under the barn! We are afraid he'll get away!"

Neither Ben nor Addison asked us another question, but hastened to see the bear. A plank was pulled up, and Ben shot the animal at short range. It scarcely moved, and did not even growl.

Removing its hide, however, proved a bitterly cold job for Willis and Ben, and they were so long about it that James, Addison and I finally left them and went home with our powder-post and the string of frozen trout.

In consequence, when James and I asked for our share of the ursine bounty, both Willis and his brother denied our claim. As the original discoverer of the bear, James deemed himself ill-used and was not on speaking terms with the Murch boys for a number of weeks. The net result of the adventure to me was merely a bad cold.

As for the powder-post, well, it was used, and at length, Asa's foot healed. So it may be as well to give the time-honored panacea the benefit of the doubt as to its efficacy as an antidote for proud-flesh.

CHAPTER VI

SCHOOL MONEY

WINDY, cold weather followed the snow-storm, but we were now able to get to the wood-lot on runners again, and completed the wood-pile in the house yard two days later. This was on Tuesday, and word having been passed through the neighborhood, the school-boys turned out for the proposed wood-chopping bee, to raise school money. Thomas Edwards was the first to appear, at seven o'clock Wednesday morning, with his sharp chopping-ax on one shoulder and his blunt splitting-ax on the other. Addison and I had ground our own axes and were in the wood-house looking up the iron wedges and beetle, used for splitting cord-wood when Ned Wilbur, Willis and Ben Murch, Rufus Sylvester and Alfred Batchelder arrived, all provided with axes and ready to go to work. They had brought lunch to be taken into the woods, but Theodora and Ellen now extended an invitation for all to come to the house, at noon, for a warm dinner.

The Old Squire also quietly brought out his own ax and said that he, too, proposed to join the party, "to keep order." Rather unexpectedly to Addison and myself James Doane made his appearance in the yard; he also had an ax on his shoulder, and it transpired that the old gentleman had sent for him, to come for a day's work. We had expected that two days would be required to cut eight cords, since few of the boys could really cut, split and pile more than half or three-fourths of a cord in a day. But with this strong

reinforcement we set off for the woods, greatly encouraged.

Wood on the stump was not deemed of much value at this time. Nearly all the farmers had large woodlots in which they cut their fuel without much regard for future want or the preservation of forests.

The whole party now proceeded to the east woodlot, where we had recently got wood for the house yard.

"Here is a good place, boys," said the Old Squire, "along the upper side of this little opening which we made last week. Here are straight-bodied maples that will split well, and a dozen or two white birches and yellow birches. Go ahead, but take care not to fall trees on each other, and look out for your feet. Sharp axes are bad company for boys' toes."

As a matter of fact the old gentleman soon found it necessary to allot our trees to us and assign to each his place. Alfred Batchelder and Halstead had taken a tree together to chop and after falling it, attempted to chop in company, after a manner known to woodsmen as "chip-chop," that is, both in one scarf — an exceedingly dangerous method. The Old Squire was obliged to forbid this, in the interest of common safety, and as a result the irrepressible Alfred waxed saucy. The Old Squire made as if not hearing him, and Alfred went on for some moments, saying that he should do as he liked and that he did not come there to be ordered around by anybody, etc., till James Doane suddenly bade him keep quiet or he would roll him in the snow. But for the most part all went well and merrily. The ax strokes made the frosty woods resound. Trees went crashing down, and with each tree-fall a cheer rose.

James and the Old Squire now turned their attention chiefly to splitting the four-foot logs, as we boys chopped them. Occasionally they were obliged to use the beetle and wedges on a log, but for the most part

a few blows of the ax in the end of the log would cleave the frozen wood along its entire length.

Of the boys, Addison, Thomas and the two Murches were the best choppers. Ned Wilbur and I were about equally matched. Alfred Batchelder was rather more experienced than Halstead, but both of them, after the first hour, were much inclined to stand talking and watch the others work.

At twelve o'clock we went to dinner and had an hour's nooning, then fell to work again till four o'clock, when we stopped chopping and began piling the wood in tiers. By this time, I was very tired myself, and the others had grown more quiet. At dusk we had the fresh cleft wood piled up and were ready to shoulder our axes and go home.

"How much have we cut?" Addison asked, as the Old Squire stood looking the piles over.

"Plump eight cords," said James.

"Yes, I think it will measure that," said the Old Squire.

By good luck, too, no one had cut a foot or even scarred his boot. The old gentleman had looked for at least one case of cut foot that day, and had a stout string in his pocket on purpose for "cording" ankles.

"Now the next thing is to haul our wood to the village," Addison said. "How many can bring teams to-morrow?" Thomas and the Murch boys and Alfred already had the promise of their teams at home, on any day, for this purpose. But Ned could not have one till the day following, and Rufus was not able to bring a team. It was agreed that Thomas should come with his oxen the next day and assist Addison to draw several loads of the wood out to the road. Once on the well-trodden highway, each team could draw a cord of wood, but not from the wood-lot up the pasture side.

Accordingly, next day we yoked up and, with

Thomas' assistance, drew three cords of the wood to the road where it was piled ready for "topping out" the loads for market.

Wednesday was a great day with us, in the wood business. Before sunrise shouts of "Haw, Buck, get up there, Golden!" announced the arrival of boys with ox teams. Addison had risen at five; and we had breakfast before six, while it was still dark. The oxen, steers and horses were fed, and we were all ready, when Thomas and the others arrived. It was a jocund setting-forth. The youthful teamsters shouted and so-hoed to each other; chains jingled, sled shoes creaked on the dry, hard snow and in the woodland the trees were snapping loudly from the frost in their trunks.

The Old Squire went to the lot with us, to supervise the loading of the sleds. About six cord feet of wood were loaded on each sled, and as fast as a load was ready, it was despatched on its way, to be topped out up at the road with enough more to make a full cord.

Addison took charge of our horse team and set off in advance, and when our ox-team was loaded, I was not a little surprised and gratified to have the Old Squire say to me that I might drive it, for I had expected that it would be intrusted to Halstead. No great skill as a teamster was required to drive steady, well-broken old Bright and Broad, however; and whether Gramp deemed it a good lesson for me, or whether he considered the team safer in my charge than with Halstead, did not appear. Halstead was offended, however, and said at first that he would not go to the village, if he could not drive a team, but finally came on behind the Murch team, with Ben who also had no team, since Willis drove theirs.

The only difficulty on the road was the frequent necessity of turning out into the snow for teams which we met. Our progress with such heavy loads was

slow, and as the distance was nearly seven miles, we were until past noon on the road.

Addison with the horse team had made better time and had his load disposed of when we reached the house where the entire eight cords of wood was to be delivered. There was room for but one load at a time in the narrow yard, and all joined in the task of unloading each sled in turn. The oxen were then fed with the bundles of hay which we had brought, and while the cattle were eating, we devoured our own lunches with keen appetites.

No time had been wasted, yet it was two o'clock before we were ready to set off for home. With empty sleds the teams walked a little faster, however; we were able to ride now, for the oxen needed no attention on the homeward trip, save when teams were met. All six sleds followed, one behind the other, with all of us save Addison riding on the forward sled.

Six cords of the wood were thus marketed, and next day Addison and Thomas drew the other two cords and brought home with them that evening the pay for it, thirty-two dollars, in green-backs, which Addison carefully locked up in his trunk, till after the district school money should be used. We had certainly earned the money, yet earned it quite pleasantly.

CHAPTER VII

A NOVEL VENTURE

THAT evening — the evening we finished drawing the wood — a new plan was hit on for raising more school money.

On his way home, Addison had called at the post office and got our weekly newspapers.

Theodora usually read the news items in *The Independent,* quite carefully. As she sat poring them over, she suddenly looked across to Addison and said, "What are 'Christmas greens?'"

The latter looked up, uncertain for the moment, then replied that he guessed they were not anything eatable. "What else does it say about them?" he asked absently.

"It says, 'Christmas greens have begun to come into the city (New York). The trade in Christmas trees bids fair to be brisk,'" Theodora read from her paper.

"Oh, it's some kind of green stuff, laurel or evergreens, I suppose, for decorating rooms and halls and churches," replied Addison.

At that time Christmas trees had not come in vogue with us; we had scarcely heard of them. Addison, however, had read of such use of small evergreen trees. "They stand a little pine, or spruce, or fir tree, up in a church, or a room, and put wax tapers on it and also presents, I believe," said he.

At the Old Squire's the only rite or festivity at Christmas consisted of hanging one's stocking in the chimney corner. Sometimes a few cents, or a stick of candy, or a roll of lozenges had been known to be found in stockings on Christmas mornings.

"Well, here we could easily get a 'Christmas tree' by going out to the woods," Theodora remarked, "but in New York the folks have to buy them."

"They would have to buy them in Boston, or even in Portland, or any city," said Addison. "People cannot go out in the vicinity of a city and chop down a tree at pleasure. Probably such evergreen trees bring a good price."

"If they do, we could make something by selling what there are out along the border of our woods," said Theodora, laughing.

"Maybe," said Addison, still absently, — for he was trying to read all the while.

Nothing further was said at the time, but it was mentioned at the breakfast table next morning, when Theodora remarked that if any one could sell a hundred Christmas trees at fifty cents apiece, quite a nice sum would come of it.

"I think it likely they would sell for that in Portland," replied Addison. "But it would be a long way to draw them from here."

It seemed a very visionary scheme to us all, at first; no one was serious about it, till it had been mentioned several times, when Addison suddenly grew interested and expressed a conviction that we could really make it profitable. The Old Squire also thought the plan might succeed.

Next evening Theodora called at the Edwards, Wilburs and Murches, and canvassed the project afresh. After much discussion of ways and means, Thomas and Willis offered to furnish each a horse, and so make up a span, if we would set our large hay-rack on two traverse-sleds for transporting the trees to Portland.

Next forenoon we hitched up and driving down the wood-road to the borders of the lot, began the task of selecting and cutting small spruce and fir trees. Ned, Thomas, both the Murch boys and also Catherine, Elsie Wilbur, Theodora and Ellen went with us. It

was an entirely new business, and there were a great many diverse opinions and much earnest discussion as to how it should be conducted. Theodora had the clearest idea as to what was wanted, and took the lead in selecting the trees to be cut. Most of the evergreens chosen were from eight to ten feet in height, and we took great care not to mar the graceful boughs and "balsam buds" of the firs.

As fast as one was cut, the girls dragged it to the rack and soon had the snow around it covered with green heaps.

I recollect that we cut three large trees, for we argued that in some of the churches the Sunday school children might be holding a festival, and would want a big one. One of these larger firs was fully twenty feet in height, and not less than thirty-five feet in circumference.

I remember that at first we were not a little puzzled how to pack them in the rack so as not to crush the delicate boughs. At last we tried standing them up, beginning at the forward end, and crowding them as closely as possible, and succeeded in packing more in the rack than one would suppose possible. I think there were fifty-seven or fifty-eight trees. The three large ones were set in the rear, and allowed to lean far back over the rail.

It was a prodigiously bulky, green load, though by no means a heavy one. We were tired and hungry before we reached home with it.

Willis, Tom and Ned, Addison and I, then arranged to start for Portland at four o'clock the next morning. Theodora and Catherine suggested that Willis should dress up as "St. Nicholas," with Tom and Ned as his assistants. Such a device, they fancied, would help the sale, and the girls worked two "signs," with the words, "Christmas Trees, 50 cents each!" upon them. The letters were in red yarn, a foot high, on a broad strip of white cloth. These were to be stretched on

either side of the load on entering the city. For a seat on our drive to Portland, we rigged a board across the top of the rack at the forward end.

Next morning we were astir at three o'clock, but it was between four and five before we were ready to start.

Day had scarcely broken. The morning star shone cold and bright, and the wind blew sharply, making the snow fly at times.

Our seat was sheltered by the green boughs, and we sat as snugly as we could to keep warm, but we were obliged to get down at times and run smartly to stir our blood.

It was a tedious day's drive, yet we had some sport from it. Almost every one we met would cry out, "What are you going to do with all that green stuff?" or, "Where are ye taking all those firs to?" Addison's answer was always, "Christmas trees, for Portland!"

We ran foul of a load of hay which we met in the road, but got clear without any great damage. At a place where the highway was near the railroad, our horses, unused to the steam cars, tried to run away, and it proved difficult holding them from that high seat, without a fender to brace our feet against.

In the afternoon, too, we passed a schoolhouse just as the boys came out, at recess. Full of fun, they began to snowball us. We jumped down and retaliated. The snowballs flew! There was a battle, but we routed them and drove them into their entry.

Several snowballs flew in at the door. The master came out, and we fell back, leaving one fellow rubbing his ear.

That night we put up at a farmer's, named Martin, in the town of Westbrook, a few miles out of Portland. He charged us "nine shillings" for our night's lodging.

Getting an early start the next morning, we drove into town. Near the bridge from Westbrook into the city, we put out our signs, but could not muster courage

to don the old hats, coats and belts which we had brought to personate St. Nicholas.

Following the street, which had a track laid for horse-cars, we came out into another long, broad street, probably Congress Street.

It was early, much too early, in fact; the great street looked gray, cold and deserted. Just then an almost empty car came grinding past. The driver did not so much as notice us with a cast of his eye.

Here and there a muffled-up passer's boot-heels struck loudly on the sidewalk. A policeman from the other side of the street gave us a surly glance. It seemed as if nobody would or could possibly want anything of us or our load.

"Well, what are we going to do, Willis?" Tom asked at last. "Say something. Sing out, 'Christmas trees!'" But for one, I felt as if I could not open my mouth.

"You call out, Willis," said Addison.

"No, you," said Willis, "I'm driving."

At length Ned mustered his voice and cried, "Christmas trees!" But it was in such a timid voice, with such shamefaced accent (for all the world as if he were afraid somebody would hear him) that we all laughed. A newsboy standing inside a doorway took in the situation, and reviled us.

"You keep quiet!" Thomas shouted to him, and having thus got his mouth open, he cried, "Christmas trees!" and did a little better.

Thereupon we all shouted, "Christmas trees! Christmas trees!" making the lonesome streets reecho.

No sort of notice, however, was taken of this appeal, a circumstance which disheartened us not a little.

We journeyed on, up and down different streets, but a great and ever-darkening cloud of discouragement had fallen upon us. The streets filled after a time. Carts and hacks rumbled past us. There were

many people passing now, but they seemed to ignore us, as if from a settled purpose.

Never in my life have I felt more out of place than on that morning, and my own feelings were faithfully reflected in the faces of my youthful partners.

Martin, the farmer, had advised us to ring the door bells as we drove along with our load and tell the people what we had to sell. After a time we bethought ourselves of this advice, and as Willis went on, Ned, Thomas and myself began ringing. We were now on a street where there were handsome brick dwelling-houses. Our calls, however, were mostly answered by frowzy-headed servant girls who cried, "Be off with ye!" and slammed the doors in our faces.

Ten o'clock finally struck from a church steeple — and not a tree had been sold. We had frequently halted beside the curbstone, and during one of these waits, a door opened close beside us, and an old gentleman, gray-headed and much wrinkled, came out, picking his way with his gold-headed cane.

"Ah!" said he, stopping short, "Whose are these balsams, my boys?"

"For Christmas, if anybody wants them," replied Willis, in a glum tone.

The old gentleman was critically examining the buds. "They are very good for the lungs," he remarked. "It's a pity folks do not plant them around their houses."

"But these are Christmas trees," Thomas interposed.

"Ah, yes; ah, yes," said the old gentleman absently. "They are Nature's sovereign remedy for the terrible disease of the climate in which they grow."

"These are Christmas trees, Christmas trees," we all told him again, as gently and insinuatingly as possible.

"Blind, blind! How blind! Our children die of consumption, month by month, score by score," the old

gentleman ran on, "when a little grove of these round every house would be as sure a preventive as food is of hunger."

Thomas pulled one out of the load and proffered it. "Have one?" said he. "Have one of these good balsams? Only fifty cents."

"Throughout the North Nature has planted this great antidote," the old gentleman went on, fumbling in his pocket. He drew out two quarters, which we took at once, and drove quickly on, fearing, as Ned said, that our customer might "wake up." We left his balsam leaning against a yard fence, the old gentleman still contemplating it, rapt and oblivious.

But our luck had turned. We had not gone a hundred yards farther before we met a nicely dressed lady of middle age — who looked wide-awake enough, too. We saw her eyes brighten.

"How do you sell your Christmas trees, my good boys?" she asked.

"A beauty for fifty cents!" cried Willis.

Seeing her unloose the little chain of her purse, we picked out a nice one, and Ned went with her to carry it to her door, two or three blocks away. She gave him ten cents more for that act of courtesy.

Before he got back we had sold another to a gentleman in a coupé, who tried to draw it into the carriage with him. Not ten minutes after, a butcher in a long white frock bought another.

We sold one every five or ten minutes after that. So wrought up were we by this happy change in our fortunes that not one of us thought of dinner, either for ourselves or our horses.

The best stroke of business was done at about three o'clock in the afternoon. We drew a crowd then, and our stock became small in a very few minutes. Our customers, themselves, forced us to put up our price. They began to offer a dollar for the remaining trees. Shortly after, a party of children ran off to the super-

intendent of the Sunday school at their church, and coaxed him to come and buy one of the three big trees for their vestry. We received two dollars for it. The other two large firs we did not sell. But I think we might easily have sold fifty more of the small ones if we had had them. Never had a day begun with such discouragement, and ended in such triumph.

Determined to be magnanimous now, we drove past two churches, in the gathering dusk, and left a big fir on the steps of each. It was in the *Eastern Argus,* next morning, that " some unknown Santa Claus " had left a " beautiful Christmas tree " on the steps of these churches.

We drove back to the same farmer's house where we had spent the previous night, and I am sure his good wife thought we did justice to her supper, and were bound to have our " nine shillings' " worth.

Next morning we set off for home, and it so happened that we passed the schoolhouse where we had had the battle, just as the boys came out at their forenoon recess. We felt so good-humored over our successful venture that we were now for having a jollification with them. They pitched into us, however, like hornets! Their snowballs were all made up and frozen over night. We received an awful pelting. The balls whistled about our ears vindictively, and we were glad to put our horses to their best paces and get away as fast as we could.

The net proceeds of this venture, after deducting all expenses, were thirty-three dollars and fifty cents, and this sum was laid aside for a further school fund. After the winter term was finished, we thought that it would be a good investment to have a short private term, if Joel Pierson, or some other efficient teacher, could be hired. In fact, we had grown very enthusiastic on the subject of more school. A week later, however, it was decided to take six dollars of the money for a schoolhouse stove. The old stove was

badly cracked, smoky and small, and Tibbetts was unwilling to allow Glinds to procure a better one; he declared that the old one was good enough. It brought two dollars as old iron; and for eight dollars we procured a new and larger one. Even then Tibbetts condemned the transaction.

The credit for this then novel effort, peddling Christmas trees, was clearly due to Theodora; it was her suggestion, but she never claimed the honor of it.

CHAPTER VIII

ADDISON'S CHRISTMAS MISADVENTURE

CHRISTMAS day came and passed at the Old Squire's very quietly. As I have said before, Maine people had not yet begun to celebrate the day as much as is now the custom. Something was said the previous evening, I recollect, about "St. Nick," whether he would come down our chimney or not, Addison remarking that the flue was big enough, if he desired to descend. Little Wealthy hung one of her stockings in the chimney corner, when she went to bed that night, on a large pin which she drove with a billet of wood. Halstead said that it would be a good joke to put a potato in it and did so; but I think that either Gram or Theodora removed it, for when Wealthy looked in her stocking next morning, she found a handful of new cents, a pretty bit of blue ribbon and a roll of lozenges. She was delighted with these trifles. We who were older considered that it would be too childish to hang our stockings. Addison assured Wealthy, in jest, that he had heard a clatter on the house roof in the night — when St. Nick came.

I remember that Gram wished us all "Merry Christmas" as fast as we made our appearance that morning. She was very jolly and, for the nonce, repeated an old rhyme, current when she was a girl, —

> **"I wish you merry Christmas**
> **And a happy New Year,**
> **With your pockets full of money**
> **And your stomach full of beer."**

"But that last part of the wish sounds intemperate," she added. "It ought to be changed to something better." And at the breakfast table we began to amend it; many rhymes were suggested, none of them very apposite. "And a heart without a fear," was Theodora's amendment. "And the best of all good cheer," was Addison's. Halstead declared it should be, "And a cuff on either ear." Wealthy's line was, "And a sled that you can steer." Ellen and I floundered on a number of rhymes which at best were unfit, and failed to distinguish ourselves as poets. Catherine Edwards to whom the stanza was referred, that evening, thought that it ought to run, "And a jewel in your ear," which was perhaps as good as any, in the sense of fitness for the place, although as Catherine herself admitted, it suggested a strain of personal vanity.

On New Year's there came a violent wind which blew all night, so heavily that we were much disturbed lest the farm buildings should be blown down. The wind came in great gusts, every few minutes, with lulls betwixt them. After every gust we sat listening, to hear whether the barns had been unroofed or were falling.

"Ruth, I guess the Hat has got out of the Notch!" the Old Squire exclaimed to Gram, after a particularly hard flaw during the evening.

We could not imagine what he meant, till Gram at length explained to us that he referred, humorously, to a saying common in that county, that some mythical "Clerk of the Weather" kept his old hat stuffed into the Notch of the White Mountains, to keep off the northwest winds.

Next morning we learned that our neighbor Sylvester's barn had been unroofed and one of his cows killed by a rafter which had fallen inside. The men of the neighborhood gathered to assist him to replace and re-shingle the roof; and all pronounced it a "cold job," for the weather continued severe.

In secret Addison, Thomas and a number of the other boys had for some time been planning a joke on the young people of an adjoining school district, four miles to the eastward of us, known as Baghdad. The school districts of Maine towns are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.; but locally they sometimes bear whimsical nicknames; "Baghdad" was one of these.

The boys over in Baghdad had, for a number of winters, been exercising their wits at our expense, so much so that Addison and Thomas thought it necessary to square accounts with them and restore the honors. Preparations were made quietly, and on the following night, shortly after eleven o'clock, we set off, privately, with "Old Sol" harnessed to a pung, for an incursion into Baghdad.

The cargo of that pung was remarkable and, if overhauled by strangers, would have been difficult of explanation. It consisted of a bushel basket, containing not less than twenty old socks and stockings, such as pertain to the wearing apparel of both sexes, many of them much darned, but clean and stuffed with candies, rolls of lozenges, maple sugar and raisins.

In another basket were ten or a dozen old boots, shocking ones, and in some of these were pigs' tails, or ears, a brimstone roll, carrots, turnips, red ears of corn, fragments of old greenish brass, caricatures on paper, variously inscribed in painful rhyme, old hats, a ball of stout twine, etc. There was also a long, crook-neck squash.

The bells had been removed from the shafts of the pung, and the outfit proceeded very quietly along the snowy road, by a roundabout route, for a distance of nearly or quite five miles, till we entered a piece of hemlock woods on the farther border of which stood the Baghdad schoolhouse.

About a hundred yards on the hither side of the schoolhouse, a lumber road diverged from the highway where hemlock logs had recently been drawn out to a

neighboring saw-mill. Here we turned in and, after proceeding ten or twelve rods into the woods, hitched our horse and carefully blanketed him, for the night was frosty and sharp.

This done we took our baskets on our shoulders, walked back to the road and, after listening and glancing up and down the highway, entered the schoolhouse. No one could have made us out, at least by starlight. In addition to great coats, fur caps pulled down over our ears and knit comforters to keep us warm on our night ride, Addison had what looked to be a long white beard — it was the tail of a white horse — hanging far down in front of his coat.

We knew most of the boys in "Baghdad." They outnumbered us in the Old Squire's district and were inclined to be unfriendly, but the girls were pleasant acquaintances. Addison and Thomas had hung May-baskets to a number of them, the previous spring — and been hotly chased home by a strong party of the boys who threatened unpleasant proceedings if they caught us. Hence the sedulous caution in our movements.

Two days previously, however, Addison had not scrupled to visit the Baghdad school one afternoon for an hour; he had a motive as will appear; but not to fall into difficulties with the boys over there, he took care to enter after school had been called to order, and to take leave before it was dismissed.

Not one country schoolhouse in a dozen in that county was then locked at night. We entered without difficulty. A faint sense of warmth still lingered about the stove, and opening it we raked forward a few bright coals and warmed our fingers.

Addison then lighted the lantern which we had brought; and we proceeded to decorate "Baghdad." The seats were benches with long desks behind the backs of each and shelves underneath for the books. Addison had observed, during his call, where all the

older boys and girls sat. Beneath the shelves of their respective seats plump stockings of confectionery were hung to many of the girls, with befitting notes attached. Addison was a good hand at such efforts; I still remember some of them:

"Tried to get down your chimney and couldn't, Amy Eastman. Fire was too hot. Had to come to the schoolhouse. Should never keep a fire Christmas night. St. Nick."

"Please burn out your chimney, Myra Edes. All full of soot. Couldn't get down, at all!"

"Pray do build a bigger chimney at your house, Minnie Wilkins. I'm getting too stout to crawl down such a narrow one. Your affectionate St. Nick."

The old boots were for the boys; and the accompanying notes were not complimentary.

"Tickle your nose with this little pig's tail, Rufus Eastman. That is all you will get from me, this year. They say you were saucy to the schoolmaster, last winter. Try and behave yourself better next year. St. Nick."

"Quit off tobacco, Tim Jackson, and take a bite off this turnip once in a while. It will sweeten up your breath."

The crook-neck squash was for a tall lathy youth, named Cephas Morton, and had pinned to it this bit of personal advice. "Look at this squash, Cephas, and pull that crook out of your spine."

The roll of brimstone was for a somewhat profane youth, named America Robbins. It was wrapped in a piece of paper on which was written,

"Better skip those hard words, Merrick. I've been harking to you for some time. Remember, Merrick, that there's a land where the candy is all hard and yellow. Here's a stick of it for you. Take a sniff at it now and then."

If we had confined our efforts that night to the Baghdad schoolhouse we might have gotten away scot-free.

But there were three girls, sisters, named Thomas — Myrtle, Edith and Leola — very attractive, living about a quarter of a mile from the schoolhouse, in a large, low, one-story farmhouse, flanked by two barns and a number of sheds and other out-buildings.

Nothing less would answer for Addison, Tom and Willis Murch than the bold scheme of hanging three of the best filled stockings down the chimney at the Thomas place. The plan was to approach cautiously, mount a shed in the rear, from the roof of which it would be easy to pass to the roof of the ell and thence to the house roof. By means of twine Addison deemed it feasible to let down the stockings into the fire-place of the farmhouse sitting-room, here they would be discovered on kindling a fire the following morning.

Accordingly, leaving our two bushel baskets at the schoolhouse, we went along the road to the Thomas place. It was near two o'clock by this time. No one was astir. The house was dark. We gained the shed roof, climbed on the ell and went softly along the ell roof to the house. Willis, Thomas and I went no further, and passed up the stockings and lines to Addison who had mounted to the roof of the house.

He had scarcely begun to lower the first stocking down chimney, however, when we heard sleigh bells and saw — for the stars shone brightly — a team coming along the road, from the direction of the schoolhouse. In the sleigh, as we learned afterwards, were Tim Jackson and another boy, named Roscoe Parmenter, on their way home from a young folks' party, a few miles distant.

Willis and I lay low on the ell roof and easily escaped observation. Addison, too, sheltered himself behind the big chimney top and was not seen till after they had passed, when one of them happened to look back and espied "St. Nick," standing beside the chimney! If they had hailed us, or called out, we might possibly have escaped, but they said nothing and we

supposed that they had not seen us. In fact, they knew not what to think of the circumstance, at first; but as they drove on, they mistrusted that some prank was on foot. At the next two houses, where the Eastman and Robbins families lived, on opposite sides of the road, they stopped and, waking the people, announced that there were suspicious characters about the Thomas place.

Rufus, Luke and Charley Eastman, with Ben and Merrick Robbins, at once turned out; and as Addison was making fast the last of the strings to a brick on the chimney top, the whole party suddenly appeared up the road, and shouted vigorously!

Our plight for escape could hardly have been worse. Earlier in the season we might have run away across the fields and gained the woods. But with a foot and a half of snow on the ground, the road was our only avenue for flight.

"Put for the pung," whispered Willis; and we three on the ell roof dropped off into a drift of snow in front of it and ran. Addison as hastily descended off the house roof to the ell and, remembering certain things better than we did, called after us in a low tone, but thinking there was no time to lose and that he had best be running, himself, we fled down the road at our handsomest paces. Addison, however, on gaining the ground, darted into a wood-house and hastily took refuge on top of several tiers of stove-wood there.

The pursuing party saw us as we emerged upon the road, and chased us for some distance. We then heard Merrick Robbins say, "Here ain't all of 'em!" whereupon he and two of the others turned back to look about the Thomas premises.

The Thomases, too, were now appearing at doors and windows. But Rufus Eastman and the three others still pursued us. In fact, they were not more than two hundred yards in our rear; but Willis, Thomas and I knowing that everything depended on

speed, exerted ourselves to distance them and widened the interval a little by the time we reached the schoolhouse. We dared not stop here to get the baskets, but dashed around a bend of the road, into the woods. It was not so light in the shadows of the hemlock trees; we passed out of sight of our pursuers and, turning in at the logging-road, had the satisfaction of hearing them run past.

Meantime Merrick and the others, with the Thomases, were searching the sheds and barns. Early in the hubbub, however, Myrtle Thomas discovered the stockings in the fire-place; and both she and the others immediately guessed that their nocturnal visitors were not very dangerous. The alarm terminated in much laughter, but they continued searching; and Addison, lying flat on top of the wood-pile, heard a great many comical remarks. Once they came into the wood-house with a lantern, and one of the boys threw several billets of wood on top of the tiers, where Ad lay; but he did not stir.

At length the boys departed and the Thomases went indoors. As soon as Addison deemed it safe, he made his escape and hurried down the road. It was his impression that the whole party had turned back from chasing Willis, Thomas and me, to hunt him. Hence he supposed that we had escaped to the pung and were waiting for him in the woods. On reaching the schoolhouse, he went in to see if we had taken the baskets, and was a little surprised to find that we had not done so. He set them together and was on the point of coming out at the door with them, when he heard voices and caught sight of Rufus and the others, now just returning along the road from their chase after us; — for they had run on past us for half a mile or more, and being much out of breath by that time, had rested and were returning slowly. Willis, Thomas and I, wrapped up in the pung, heard them pass.

After a glance to make sure that it was not Willis

and I, Addison drew back into the little shed or portico of the schoolhouse and gently closed the outer door. He then tip-toed into the schoolroom and peeped out at the window. Generally Addison was a good strategist; but fortune was against him that night. The portico door, which he had gently closed, swung back, partly open of itself. As Rufus and the other boys were passing, they noticed that it was ajar.

"How came that door open?" one of them said. "I'll bet those scamps have been in the schoolhouse!"

They stopped, then approached the door.

In great trepidation again, Addison hurriedly got on top of one of the benches, and reaching a little scuttle in the low ceiling of the room, pushed it open and raised himself by main strength through the hole. In fact, he had but barely time to draw himself up, when the searchers entered noisily, discovered the baskets and became much excited again. Addison could hear all they said very plainly, as they lighted matches at the stove and examined the baskets, then looked in the wood-shed and in the dark corners of the room.

"We've scared 'em off," said Rufus, "but they will be back after their baskets before morning. Luke, you put back and get Merrick and the others. We'll stay here and watch."

Meantime, Willis and I turned the team and drove slowly out of the logging-road to the highway. After waiting a while, Willis went back on foot along the road to the bend, and while watching there saw Merrick and four or five others coming, at a run, toward the schoolhouse. Thinking that another pursuit was being made, he ran to the pung and we drove off as fast as we could. What had become of Addison we had little idea; but we surmised that he might have escaped by what was called the "north road," leading around from "Baghdad" to our home district.

He was not at home, however, when we arrived; nor did he appear next morning. I was obliged to

explain his absence to our folks as best I could. We felt considerable anxiety concerning him, but were somewhat at a loss what to do.

In point of fact he was a close prisoner in the little dark loft, over the Baghdad schoolroom. For so confident were those boys that we would return to get our baskets, Rufus, Merrick, Luke and two others kindled a fire in the stove and kept watch from the window. Addison had the pleasure of hearing them describe what they meant to do, if they caught us.

After it grew light, all save Luke went home to get breakfast. He declared that he would stay, keep fire and sweep the schoolroom — it being his turn to do so — and that Rufus might bring him something to eat, at school time.

Addison now had thoughts of coming down from the loft, overpowering Luke and escaping; and he was afterwards exceedingly sorry that he had not done so; but he disliked to betray his identity and still hoped to escape, somehow, unrecognized.

After a time the scholars assembled, and when the girls began to find the stockings of confectionery under their desks, and the boys to read the advice given them in the old boots, there was a general pow-wow — all of which Addison heard.

The girls openly praised "St. Nick" whom some of them declared they knew was Addison. The Thomas girls told what they had found in their fire-place; and there were lively comments all around, till the teacher entered and school began.

All this time Addison had scarcely dared move. He lay on two boards which were placed across the scantlings to which the laths and plaster of the ceiling were affixed. It grew very warm, too; for they had a hot fire in the stove below. The heat made him drowsy in spite of himself; it was dark up there, and he had been astir all night. He began to catch cat naps; and at length, in one of these which may have lasted some

minutes, he rolled uneasily over, off the narrow boards, jumped to recover himself and actually thrust one foot, boot and all, down through the plaster!

Instantly there was a scream from the girls' seats! — followed by a whoop from the boys'! Schoolmaster Wilson stood staring, amazed, then exclaimed, "Whoever is up there, come down, instantly!"

Dreadfully mortified and broad awake enough now, Addison for a moment was inclined to defy them all and stand a siege; for he fancied he could hold the loft against all comers. But reflecting that in the end he would inevitably be forced to surrender, he crept to the scuttle.

"Come down instantly!" the master again called out.

Addison raised the scuttle and (one can imagine with what a chapfallen smile) showed his face.

A roar of recognition, and an outburst of ironical laughter and jeers from the boys greeted him.

He was in for it now! Slowly he lowered himself to the desk below and then to the floor and, not forgetting his manners, made his best bow!

Another shout of laughter arose!

"Well, sir, how came you up there?" cried the master.

"Mr. Wilson," replied Ad, "that is quite a long story. But I meant no harm. I did not get up there willingly. I did not mean to make a disturbance."

"But you have made one!" exclaimed the master. "I think we shall have to keep hold of you a while. You have done us some damage."

"I will gladly pay for the hole I have made in the plaster," replied Addison, humbly.

"Well, sir, you may take a seat at my desk, till school is dismissed. On second thought, I think you may sit *on the desk* and face the school. When we have such unusual visitors, we want them where we can all see them!"

This was a humiliation; but Addison was obliged to submit to it, for the master placed himself between him and the outer door. Worse still, although he had slipped out of his St. Nicholas togs before coming down, some of the boys looked up in the loft and drew them out. The master then compelled him to don the whole absurd rig, horse-tail whiskers and all, as he sat there on top of the desk, facing the whole school!

He no doubt suffered agonies of mortification during the next half or three-quarters of an hour. There was one continuous laugh and titter. Study and lessons wholly ceased. At length the master dismissed school for the forenoon and went off to his boarding-place for his dinner, leaving Ad to the tender mercies of all "Baghdad!"

Merrick, Cephas, Rufus, Tim and others at once made at him, with doubled fists, promising him a sound drubbing — for his Christmas advice. But those girls, Myrtle, Edith, Leola and others, fifteen or twenty of them, promptly gathered around him and stoutly declared that their nice, dear "St. Nick" should not be molested! They formed a great ring about him, protected him out of the schoolhouse and escorted him away down the road, through the woods. It is always a good thing to be on the right side of the girls. So at least Addison found it.

Meantime Willis, Thomas and I had been through our own district and raised a party. At noon that day, fourteen of us set off to invade "Baghdad" and rescue our missing man, *vi et armis* and *pugnis et calcibus*.

We met him on the road, coming home afoot, with the bushel baskets resting on his shoulders, partly over his head; and his face, as he looked out from under them, wore a very sheepish grin.

He would not tell us what had befallen him, but our girls got the whole story from the Thomas girls a week later.

CHAPTER IX

JOEL PIERSON ARRIVES

ON the following Saturday afternoon Elder Witham came, but so blinding a snow-storm had set in that there were no Sunday services next day.

But to us young folks a far more interesting personage was expected that day, none other than our greatly desired, long-expected schoolmaster, Joel Pierson, from Bates College.

The storm was so severe that we feared he would not be able to reach us, but at about three in the afternoon a horse and pung, piled with luggage, was seen plodding up the lane.

"There's old Joel, trunks, maps and all!" shouted Addison and rushed out to welcome him. We all followed.

Horse, pung, driver and Joel himself were so covered with snow as to be scarcely distinguishable. In the pung was stowed not only a huge trunk, but two great rolls, carefully bound up, containing the much-valued school maps. In a large box, too, was Joel's own school melodeon, which he always took with him to every schoolhouse where he taught, — although in point of fact we had a melodeon.

Joel could not sing a note himself. "I have no more voice than a guinea-hen," he often remarked; but he enjoyed music in the schoolroom. "It is a good thing to sing together," he was accustomed to say, "it makes us all feel more kindly to each other." Unless we were very late with lessons he never dismissed school, either at noon or night, without singing.

He brought two dozen school song-books.

I would give ten times the price for one of those old song-books now, but they have long since ceased to be printed and sold, and I cannot even hear of a copy. Trite old songs they were, but they went well.

"John Brown had a little Indian."

And, —

"Oh, there's nothing but shame to the tardy name."

And, —

"Pure, cold water! That's the drink for me."

And, —

"Of all the mighty nations in the East or in the West."

All these are imperishably associated with recollections of Joel Pierson and his school melodeon.

On this Sabbath afternoon of his arrival, Joel came stamping his feet into the wood-house, shaking the snow off his old somewhat worn overcoat, for he was a very saving young man. Grasping Gram by the hand, he sang out in his odd, cheery, falsetto voice,

"Well, now, 'Mother,' it does a fellow good to see you again. Seems just like getting home. And Squire, how are you? Didn't expect to get back here this winter, but here I am, same old sixpence! And Theodora, you look just as good as ever. Your face is as big as a family Bible, and it's such a downright good face that there ought to be a lot more of it. Addison, how you've grown! grown handsome, too! My stars, Addison, you will take the shine all off me among the girls this winter! And Halstead, you limb of the Old Boy, how do you do these days? You've been growing, too. Got to be almost as tall as I am. All the same I'll take the kinks out of you, if you don't behave better than you did some days, last winter!" — shaking him heartily by the hand. "And Ellen and Wealthy, you nice little things, how are both of you?" — getting one by each hand at once and swinging them clean around him.

"And who's this round-headed chap that seems to have stepped in here since I stepped out?" he demanded suddenly looking me over very critically Addison made haste to introduce me to Joel, and I stepped forward to shake hands, since shaking hands seemed to be a specialty of his. He grabbed me promptly, gave me a jerk and a tremendous grip. "Then you are another one! All the way from Philadelphia! Right from under the shadow of Girard College. Think you can give me points on education, hey? You look pretty *muscley* for a youngster. But don't you once think you can handle me, for you couldn't do it!" Whereupon he illustrated how easily he could trip me up and set me in a chair; and although this seemed a somewhat informal and hasty sort of greeting, I conceived a great liking for Joel, at once.

There was a vein of semi-extravagant drollery in the man; he was odd, offhand and grotesque in many of his movements; yet he somehow gained one's confidence from the moment he spoke. The fact was that Joel was a young man of sterling principles and a good heart. The Old Squire often said of him, that he was "always on the right side." I am sorry the old photograph which I have of him is so poor a one, yet it looks quite a good deal like him.

By this time we had all drifted into the sitting-room and Joel was greeting the Elder. In short, he fell into his old place in the family quite as if he had been away on a visit only. Addison, Theodora, Ellen and all the others were delighted to have him back again; and from that time onward till the close of school there was always something pleasant and amusing coming off, either in progress or being planned.

Joel enjoyed play the best of any one of his age (twenty-two) whom I have ever met. The sitting-room, evening and morning, was the scene of uproarious fun and laughter as well as of hard earnest study. By the time we had been studying closely for half or

three-quarters of an hour — for Joel was himself a student as well as teacher — he would start up, exclaiming, "It's time to have a fracas!" and perhaps launch a cushion at Addison's head, as a preliminary. Then for five or ten minutes there would be lively times there, when all would subside into study again.

One of Joel's least amiable traits, perhaps, was his penchant for playing practical jokes, never of a dangerous kind, yet tricks none the less, which sometimes occasioned a considerable commotion in the house. He had been the youngest of a family of boys at home, and his older brothers had enured him to rough sport while very young. In person Joel was rather above medium height, not of symmetrical form, but quite muscular; in complexion he was sallow, with black hair, gray eyes and a nose far from Grecian. Both in voice and gestures he was noticeably peculiar.

I mention all these memories of Joel Pierson, chiefly because they are so interesting to me, personally; for he was the first teacher who aroused the desire in me to study, for learning's sake, to acquire knowledge for the benefit which he made plain would come to me from it.

What a contrast the old schoolhouse presented by noon, Monday, from the aspect of gloom and discontent which it had worn under the régime of Master Sam Lurvey! Every vacant place on the walls was filled with Joel's large, colored maps; he had even brought and hung up a red curtain at the window behind his desk to give warmth of color to the gray old interior. This was a hint which Theodora and Catherine acted on to add two more colored curtains for the back side of the room. In winter a dash of such strong color cheers a room wonderfully.

The melodeon with its stack of song-books was set up in front of the desk; a small globe, too, made its appearance from the capacious melodeon box; and a large, unabridged Webster's dictionary was laid open

on the desk, with an invitation to every one to come and consult it frequently.

Even the worser boys in the school felt the influence of these improved preparations for study. They knew, too, from past experience that Joel could govern, as well as instruct, if necessary. He was one of those teachers, however, who have very little personal dignity to sustain. As long as pupils were of the right spirit and desirous of study, Joel cared very little for any joke or minor irregularity which they might perpetrate, even if it set the whole school laughing. He would laugh, too, as heartily as any one. If he thought we were getting a little dull from prolonged study and quiet, he would even get up a laugh in school himself; he was a believer in laughter.

On the other hand, however, let a pupil grow indolent with a tendency to mischief and disorder, and Joel would immediately find means to make him grieve profoundly. The use of the rod was not then prohibited in the schoolroom. If a boy really meant to be bad and unruly, Joel would keep an eye to him for about three days, without saying much, then send out for a big birch stick and without more ado proceed to give the evil-doer such castigation as he would vividly remember all the remainder of his life. It was currently said that when once Joel had fallen to birching a boy, he would never desist till the stick was worn out!

There were no such punishments administered that winter, however; for the most part good feeling prevailed throughout the term. Joel wished to hear nothing of Master Lurvey from any one; and he set the classes at work much as if there had been no attempt at a winter school before he came. Our arithmetic class first made a rapid review, then settled to do some diligent cyphering on advance work. It was while reviewing Decimal Fractions that an incident occurred which was remembered for years afterwards.

"Why do you place the sign + after this decimal?" Joel asked me in class.

"Because it will not come out without a remainder and I wish to show that the answer I have here isn't the whole of it," I replied rather hazily.

"What did you attempt to divide?"

"150,000,000 by 7," said I.

"And you got?"

"21.428571.428571.428571+"

"Do you see anything peculiar about it?"

"Yes; the same set of figures, 428571, occur in the quotient, over and over, and I never come out without a remainder."

"The next, Catherine, what sort of a decimal do you call this?"

"A repetend, or circulating decimal."

"Why?"

"Because we keep coming around to the same set of figures in the quotient, I suppose, and would always have a remainder at the end, even if we continued dividing all day."

"But if you were to divide all day steadily, adding cyphers, you must get the decimal down very small," said the master, quizzically. "There couldn't be much left of the remainder, could there? Seems to me you might get it down pretty near nothing. What do you think, Thomas Edwards?"

Thomas pondered the question for some moments. The problem appeared to have occurred to him in this light very forcibly, for the first time. "Why, I should really think that anybody would get it down to nothing *by dividing long enough,*" replied he, thoughtfully.

This was just such an answer as Joel liked to get. "It does look that way, doesn't it, Thomas?" said he, argumentatively. "It would seem that we might *tire that remainder out* if we kept annexing cyphers and chased it long enough. According to the atomic theory of matter, you come at last to atoms which are indivis-

ible. Now if that theory is correct, I see no reason why, in numbers, we would not in time come to a point where further division would be impossible. Isn't that the way it looks to you, Thomas?"

"Why, yes, it kind of seems to me so," replied Thomas, still very thoughtfully.

"What is a repetend, Theodora?"

"It is the figure, or set of figures, in the circulating decimal, which is constantly repeated, and is indicated by a dot over that figure, or over the first and the last of the set of figures."

"In the example above, what figures constitute the repetend and how would you indicate them on the board, Thomas?"

Whereupon Tom wrote $.42857\dot{1} - .42857\dot{1} - .42857\dot{1}$.

"Every time you annex a cypher and divide by 7, you decrease the actual remainder tenfold, and it does seem, doesn't it, Thomas, that in time, by dividing long enough, you might get that remainder very near down to nothing at all," continued Joel, as if still arguing the question. "How many in the class think that it might be divided out to nothing, by working long enough?"

Not a hand went up, at first.

But after a while Thomas boldly thrust up his hand. The others laughed. Joel laughed, too.

"It could never be done," said Addison.

"How do you know?" exclaimed Thomas whom the laughter irritated a little. "Did you ever try it? Did any of you ever try it?"

"No; I never tried it," replied Addison dryly.

"Then you don't know; and you had better not state what you don't know," retorted Thomas.

"And you had better try it?" advised Addison, ironically.

"Yes, Thomas, suppose you try it," said Joel. "I do not think any one ever has tried it, so you will be

on new ground and there's no saying exactly what the result may be."

Thomas was a very resolute boy; he never declined a challenge from any one. What he thought he knew he would always stick to, through thick and thin.

"All right!" he exclaimed. "I will try it. At any rate I will not say I know a thing till I do know it," he added with an aggressive glance at Addison who sat with a provoking grin on his countenance.

At noon we bantered Thomas a good deal. "Laugh, if you want to!" he rejoined stoutly. "I'm not so sure. I said I would try reducing it down, and I will."

This was on Saturday, — for at that time it was customary to have Saturday holiday but once a fortnight. School was no sooner dismissed at night, than Thomas carefully cleaned the blackboard and placed his dividend, for proving the circulating decimal a hoax, along the top margin of the board in small figures, to wit, 7)15.000000000000, and began dividing. "I can divide half an hour before dark," said he. "Then I will go home, get my supper and get a lamp and come back."

Catherine privately tried to dissuade him, but he was resolute to keep his word and see how long-winded a circulating decimal really is.

"You will soon get the blackboard full of figures," remarked Joel who enjoyed a thing of this sort immensely. "But here is a lead pencil and a tab of blank white paper. You can carry the operation from the board to a sheet of paper and then from one sheet to another; and as fast as you cover the sheets you can pin them up in a row from the end of the board around the room to the right."

We went home and left Thomas there hard at work.

About seven in the evening Catherine called at the Old Squire's.

"I thought I would come down and study with

Theodora awhile; it is sort of lonesome at home this evening," she said, laughing.

"Is Tom at the schoolhouse?" I asked.

"Yes; he came home to get his supper and a paper of pins, but took a lamp and went back; and he filled his pocket with doughnuts before starting."

Joel laughed heartily.

"Suppose he will stay there all night?" queried Addison.

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Catherine. "Mother is inclined to think that you kept him after school, Mr. Pierson."

This amused us boys.

"He picked up all the white and brown paper that he could find in the house," continued Catherine. "He said he should want it."

The thought of Thomas down there at the schoolhouse alone, chasing that circulating decimal, diverted us so much that it was difficult to study. At length Joel exclaimed, "It's good walking; let's all go down and see what he is about!"

This proposal was hailed with a shout; and immediately we set off. Even Wealthy went along. On coming in sight of the schoolhouse, the light of a lamp could plainly be seen through a window.

"Let's scare him," said Halstead.

"You couldn't do it," Catherine said.

"No, no," remarked Joel. "We will not disturb him, nor interfere with him in any way. Let him work. We will merely peep in on the sly to see how he is getting on and then go away. Thomas is all right. I like his grit."

We approached softly, and first Joel, then Addison and the rest of us peeped in at the window near the doorstep. Thomas sat in the desk figuring away smartly on paper; the lamp was set on the melodeon hard by. Its light illuminated the room faintly; but we could see that the blackboard was closely covered

with figures, and that there were as many as fifteen sheets of paper pinned up already.

Some one at length made a misstep and laughed. The sound reached the figurer's ear inside. "Oh, I hear you, out there!" he exclaimed, but without looking up.

We stole away. Afterwards Catherine told the girls that Thomas came home at about one o'clock.

The next day was Sunday, but we saw Thomas go past at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, in the direction of the schoolhouse; and it was dusk when he returned.

While at breakfast the following morning, at about seven o'clock, Ellen chanced to glance out and espied Thomas hurrying along the road toward the schoolhouse.

"He is going to tackle that circulating decimal again," cried Addison.

Joel was so amused that he sat laughing throughout breakfast; and it was with great difficulty and sedulously staring at the floor, or ceiling, that we kept sober faces during family prayers.

When we arrived at the schoolhouse at a few moments before nine that morning, Thomas was in the act of completing a sheetful of 42857is, which he hastily added to the row of similar sheets which now extended clean around the walls! The interior of the room presented a truly odd appearance, and there was a great deal of merriment even after the bell rang! The usual morning exercises were held, however, and then according to custom the first class in arithmetic was called. Such a vast assemblage of figures as the blackboard and all those sheets of paper presented we had none of us ever contemplated before! There were a hundred and twenty-two sheets of paper pinned in rows around the house. It was quite enough to make one's head swim, as Ellen remarked, to even attempt to enumerate them.

Thomas took his place in the class quite as a matter of course; he looked as confident as ever; and the fact that we were all regarding him with broad smiles on our faces did not appear to embarrass him in the least.

"At our last recitation, on Saturday, we had the subject of circulating decimals," Joel now observed. "The question whether a circulating decimal, consisting of a repetend, could ever be reduced and brought out without a remainder, was then raised. One of our number thought this might possibly be done by dividing long enough; and we have before us, as I conclude, the result of his efforts in that direction. Am I right, Thomas?"

"Yes, sir," replied Thomas promptly.

"What results, if any, have you obtained from your calculations?"

"Well, sir," replied Thomas, getting up slowly and facing half around so as to have all his work in full view, "I have proved and settled a number of points in my own mind at least. One of these points is that this is really and truly a circulating decimal, for as you can all see it has brought me clean around the room to the point where I started from," — indicating the long circuitous row of figured sheets of paper, with a wide gesture of his hand.

"So we see," said Joel, laughing. "But what result has come from the constant division, after annexing cyphers? Have you come out without a remainder, at last?"

"Oh, no, sir, not yet!" cried Thomas, quite as a matter of course and as if surprised at such a question.

We all laughed heartily at his tone.

"You still think then that by dividing long enough you might come out without a remainder?" questioned Joel.

"I am sure of it," said Thomas, with enthusiasm.

Addison burst forth laughing, but Catherine and Theodora looked at Tom in perplexity.

"Have you any idea how long it would require?" continued Joel.

"Yes, sir," said Thomas at once. "I think I see exactly how long it would require."

"Well, how long?" exclaimed Joel.

"*Forever,*" replied Thomas, emphatically. "No more, no less."

"Forever's a long while," said Joel.

"Well, yes," said Thomas, "and that is a long example. It will take just forever to do it in. It can be done in that time, but in nothing less."

"Isn't forever the same thing as eternity?" asked Theodora.

"Yes; eternity, or infinity," replied Joel. "Thomas has got as near the truth of the matter as any one can get, I think; and I am glad he made this trial and came to this conclusion from his own reasoning, without aid. It is worth more to him and more to you all than anything I could have said about it. Thomas will never forget what a circulating, or infinite, decimal is, I will warrant."

"No, I shall not," said Thomas. "I've been thinking of a great many other things, too, while I sat making those figures. One thing I've thought of is what you said about matter and atoms, atoms that are supposed to be indivisible. I don't believe anybody would ever come to an 'atom' so small but that it could be divided again. Or at any rate it would take just as long to *divide down* to an indivisible atom, as it would to get that decimal down. And that is forever. That is what nobody ever could come to. So nobody can ever find an atom which can't be divided. When folks talk about atoms, they are talking of something no one ever found, or ever can find. So really there is no such thing as an atom which cannot be divided."

"Thomas, you are getting us into very deep water," said Joel. "We had better return to finite decimals, I think."

The blackboard was cleared of the figures; and Tom's many sheets of paper were used to kindle the fires that week, but the points brought out that morning lingered a great while in my mind. I have pondered them often in later years, and have heard them discussed by learned authorities who considered themselves philosophers. But I have never really heard anything clearer on the subject than Thomas gave us in about thirty words that morning; and Tom never thought of such a thing as being a philosopher. It was the fresh, spontaneous effort of a school-boy's mind, and it had its effect on his whole after life.

CHAPTER X

HOW TO THAW A FROZEN PUMP: CATHERINE'S BRIGHT IDEA

MEANTIME I was having far more prosaic trouble with another, inferior kind of fractions, called vulgar. At the school which I had previously attended no proper effort had been made to teach vulgar fractions and render them plain to young minds. Although in a far more pretentious building than the red schoolhouse at the Old Squire's, the school itself was much less efficient. When I came to review my Practical Arithmetic that winter, Master Pierson promptly discovered my deficiencies. For a week he kept me hard at work on those fractions, particularly on the complex variety. Withal I was ashamed that Tom and Catherine knew all these things so much better than I did, more especially as I had come from a place where there were forty weeks of school in a year. I felt and feared that I was hopelessly dull. Shame spurred me to catch up with Thomas; but Master Joel would not let me budge, nor go on, till I could solve those examples in complex fractions. In fact, I was giving my mind to the task, quite intently, for four or five days thereafter, when — I think it was the fourth morning — I fell into a serious difficulty at home.

In short, I let the barn pump freeze up. It was January weather, seven degrees below zero, with a bitter wind blowing, as is often the case in Maine at this time of year. The Old Squire was away that week at a logging-camp up in the Great Woods. Halstead

was laid up in the house with a severe cold and had not been out of doors for several days; he generally had two or three of those colds every winter, caught imprudently, nearly always.

In consequence, Addison and I had all the barn chores to do that week. The Old Squire had sent for Asa Doane to help us, but he had failed to come. We contrived to get to school as usual, but had to rise early and hurry around. Neither of us was in the best of humor; but we divided the work between us and made haste. There were sixteen cows — but only two of them gave milk — eight yearlings and two-year-olds, two horses, three colts and fifty sheep to be cared for.

Addison took charge of the provender and hay, and did the milking, while I pitched the hay from the mow, did the pumping and watered the entire herd. His share certainly required most attention, although I did not think so, then.

It was quite true, too, that he had reminded me, the night before, to run the pump down. I had to acknowledge it, afterwards. But I had been in a kind of maze, or a daze, all day, over two of those hard examples in complex fractions. One of them I still remember distinctly.

$$\tfrac{7}{8} \text{ of } \frac{60\frac{5}{10}}{10\frac{3}{8}} \text{ of } \tfrac{8}{5} \div 8\tfrac{68}{415} = \text{What?}$$

The answer of course is 1, but I could not get it, and it was still worrying me when I reached home that night; so much so that after "fetching" the pump and watering the cattle, I had somehow forgotten to run the pump down as was the strict rule every time water was pumped in winter.

It froze up that night, solid as a rock! And next morning there was that whole stock to water, with nothing but ice in the trough. What was harder even

than ice, Addison had no sympathy for me. "I told you last night to run that pump down!" he exclaimed. "Why didn't you? Now you may lug water for all of me — and serve you right!"

He was so righteously indignant with me that at a quarter to nine, he hastened off to school, without speaking, and left me there with those cattle to water as best I could.

I could not complain. It was my job; and after he and the girls had gone to school, I set to work to carry water in two buckets from the pump in the farmhouse kitchen — all the way out through the long wood-house, wagon-house, and stable, to the west barn, and then down a flight of stairs to the watering-trough in the barn cellar!

I am wondering, too, whether many of those who read this realize how much water thirty head of cattle will drink. I let them out to the trough one by one, as I hastened back and forth from the house well, and it did seem to me that never would they stop drinking or get enough. The less water there was in the trough, the thirstier they seemed to be. Some of them actually drank four bucketfuls.

As I hurried to and fro, water slopped from the buckets, which instantly turned to ice as it fell on the floor and stairs; and the monotony of the trips was enlivened for me by tumbling down occasionally with two buckets of water.

It was eleven o'clock, and I had made forty-five or fifty trips before all those thirsty cows and horses were satisfied; the sheep had to eat snow; I then set to work to thaw out the pump with hot water. For in the house Gram and Aunt Olive were making complaint against me for slopping water about; they feared, too, lest I might pump the well dry, since wells everywhere were low that winter.

Reader, did you ever try to thaw out an iron or a copper pump with the mercury below zero — and fetch

your hot water in a bucket from a kitchen stove a hundred yards away?

The pump itself I thawed with no great difficulty, down past the "boxes" to the point where it was screwed to the inch-and-a-half lead pipe which led off aslant to the barn well forty feet distant. But that inch-and-a-half pipe was also frozen up hard and fast. I was afraid it had burst; and that added to my troubles, since the ground over the pipe was hard-frozen and now buried under six feet of snow-drifts. It would be next to impossible in such weather to dig it up and put in new pipe. That was what Addison said — for my comfort!

But the pipe, as I may add here, was very thick and of good stock. The Old Squire always made use of the best material he could purchase for all such work. The ice in the pipe, as we afterward learned, had bulged it in places, but did not actually burst it.

As soon as I had cleared the pump, I unscrewed the coupling to the pipe with a wrench, and then tried to thaw the pipe by pouring hot water into it. This one can do for five or six feet downward without great difficulty, but soon a point is reached where the hot water no longer operates, for the reason that as it cools it is not much displaced by what is poured in at the top; and still deeper it is not displaced at all, the hot which you pour in merely running over at the top.

Eight or nine feet down, where the pipe turned off underground, I came to a standstill. I persevered and fussed with it two or three hours, but quite in vain. Meanwhile I had scalded one hand rather painfully through my mitten.

Boys who read this may laugh at my troubles that day, but they were very real troubles to me. I knew not what to do, and was not a little terrified at the prospect ahead; for by three o'clock that afternoon I had to begin carrying water for the cattle again, to get them watered before dark.

I knew Addison would not help me. Moreover, he had his own large share of the chores to do. In short, I was in a hard spot.

And it got harder; for by the time I had carried fifteen or sixteen turns of water from the house well that afternoon, the kitchen pump sucked and gurgled. I had pumped the well out, and now Gram and Aunt Olive came down on me again. "Don't you take another drop of water from here!" Aunt Olive exclaimed. "Do you think I want to melt snow for water?"

"But the cattle must have water. What can I do?" I cried, nursing my scalded hand, and nearly in tears but for shame of shedding them.

"Kindle a fire under the arch-kettle in the wagon-house and melt snow yourself," said Aunt Olive, austerely. "Why in the world, too, don't you put rock salt or saltpetre in that pump pipe? Rock salt in it overnight will thaw it out."

Thus adjured, I kindled a fire in the "arch," filled the big kettle with ice and snow, then got rock salt, such as we gave to the herd. But by this time the hot water which I had poured into the pump earlier in the afternoon had cooled and frozen. I thawed it down for two feet again with more boiling hot water, then filled it up with salt grains.

Soon after, Addison came home from school and began doing his share of the chores. His face was still hard set against me. "You will have to stay at home and melt snow the rest of this winter, I guess," said he grimly.

"Snow-water isn't good for cattle, either," he added. "And I don't believe you can melt enough for them, anyway."

I was afraid I could not myself, for it melted slowly in spite of the good fire I kept. All that evening I tended the kettle, carrying the water in a bucket to the cattle and horses in their stalls. It was nine o'clock

before I could give them even one bucketful apiece. But it had to suffice; and I crept away to bed, with my smarting hand, completely tired out and discouraged by the day's struggle with cold and adversity.

My hand, I remember, kept me from sleeping much till past midnight. Then it got easier; and I was comfortably dreaming when Addison roused me at six. "Come, come!" said he. "You had better be up melting more snow, instead of snoozing there. Those cattle need water."

It was, in good truth, a hard, cold world to wake into! I had cherished faint hopes that the rock salt grains would thaw out the pump pipe, and dressing in haste, I rushed out to ascertain. The water, strongly impregnated with salt, had not frozen at the top end of the pipe; and on thrusting in a long stick, I found that the salt had actually eaten its way downward in the ice for about five feet. But it had gone no farther, and the prospect of its working its way underground to the well outside the barn was poor indeed. It might do so in a week or two, perhaps, but even that was uncertain.

Master Pierson, who had now learned of the trouble at the barn, came out with the kind purpose of aiding me, but shook his head after trying the pump.

"That pipe is frozen, probably, clean down to the water in the well," he said.

"It is hard on you, and I am very sorry to have you lose time at school," he added, with genuine sympathy.

But even sympathy does not greatly help a case like that. In still gloomier mood, I rekindled the fire in the arch, and later saw Addison depart for school, while I put in another day, melting snow for those ever-thirsty cattle. Theodora and Ellen pitied me, but there was not much that they could do to help matters. So far as I could see, there was not a ray of hope ahead anywhere. I should probably have to melt snow day and night all the rest of that winter, or at least till the

Old Squire came home. That, too, was a bitter thought. I was ashamed to have the old gentleman learn how careless I had been.

By afternoon I had grown desperate, as well as tired and disheartened. Doing my best with the arch-kettle, I could not melt snow enough to water so numerous a herd. I had been able to give them no more than a bucketful apiece that day. Some of the cows were lowing plaintively whenever they saw me enter the barn with the bucket; and as for the sheep, they were eating snow. What to do I knew not.

But relief was at hand. My good genius was about to appear. I had now been absent from school two days, and by this time my arithmetic class had begun to ask after me. Addison, I suppose, told them where I was and what I was doing, and that night six or seven of my schoolmates called on their way home, to see me at my task and sympathize, or have a little fun at my predicament, according to their dispositions.

Among them were Thomas and Catherine. As I was emerging from the barn, bucket in hand, they all met me, laughing, and then must needs go to see the pump and ask all sorts of questions which I was in no mood to answer.

But Catherine lingered, with Theodora and Ellen, after the others had gone.

"Couldn't you pour hot water into the pipe here?" she asked me.

"Oh, I have," I said, impatiently. "But it will only thaw the ice about so far down the pipe. It gets cold down there. The hot water from the top will not work down much deeper than eight feet."

"Isn't there any way you could get the real hot, boiling water down there where the ice is?" Catherine persisted in asking.

"I don't know any way," said I, not very graciously, for I was cross, and had no exalted idea of girls' wisdom.

But Catherine's eyes were still thoughtfully bent on that pipe. "If only you had a little pipe, smaller than that, to run down into it, where the ice is, and then poured the boiling water into the little pipe with a funnel, wouldn't it go right down hot against that ice and thaw it?" she persisted.

"Maybe, but I haven't any such little pipe," said I, and hastened away to the arch, to get another bucket of water.

Catherine lingered there, studying on it for some moments longer, then started off hastily.

I had no idea that she could help me, and renewed my fire; but a little later, in the twilight, Catherine and Thomas came back. They had Tom's hand-sled, and on it was a coil of old, half-inch lead pipe, the pipe of an aqueduct at the Edwards farm, which had become clogged the summer before, and had to be dug up and replaced by larger pipe.

Tom was laughing, but Catherine was much in earnest. "Let's try this!" she exclaimed. "It will go into your pump pipe, and it will bend easy. Get hot water and a funnel."

There were forty or fifty feet of this little, thin old lead pipe. We poked one end of it down the pump pipe till it touched the ice in it, and then, elevating the other end six or eight feet, we began pouring in hot water through a tin funnel.

The effect was immediately apparent. Within five minutes we were able to thrust the small pipe down two feet deeper in the pump pipe; and we now elevated the upper end of the little pipe still higher, so as to give the hot water in it greater pressure. The longer we worked, too, the faster was the ice in the large pipe melted, since the pipe was now getting hot. The water, boiling hot, came directly in contact with the ice, and as it cooled, it came bubbling up about the little pipe and flowed out at the top of the large one.

Dusk had fallen, but a lantern was lighted, and we

went on as fast as Aunt Olive, Addison and the girls could fetch hot water from the kitchen stove, for now they all turned out to help me. Within an hour that pump pipe was free of ice clear down to the well.

I was not long screwing on the pump again, and within another hour had my thirsty herd comfortably watered once more.

Master Pierson deemed Catherine's idea such a bright one that he wrote a brief account of it for the county newspaper, under the heading, " How to Thaw out a Frozen Pump." And a plumber in Portland has since told me that he saw that item in the paper, and recognizing its practical value, had a small, flexible pipe made of Britannia metal for his own use in just such cases of frozen water-pipes. Other plumbers, he said, copied it from him, till it came into quite general use throughout the northern United States. So far as he knew, plumbers in this country had not thought of that plan previously.

I hope I was really grateful to Catherine for my rescue from disgrace, and I think I was, but my recollecton is that I had little opportunity to express my gratitude that night. For the moment that Catherine found that the plan was about to succeed, she and Thomas scampered home to supper.

I have alluded to Joel Pierson's trait or weakness for practical jokes. I think that it was on Wednesday of this week that he played one upon Addison which had consequences.

Addison was always much interested in minerals. Anything in the shape of a mineral specimen was sure to attract his attention. He had made a collection of specimens from the crags and ledges in the vicinity.

That evening as we went into the sitting-room from the supper-table, whither Joel had already preceded us, the latter called out to Addison to take a look at

that pretty piece of rose quartz on the top of the fire-frame.

In all good faith and quite unsuspicious, Addison at once walked to the fire-frame and took up the bit of quartz. He had no sooner raised it, however, than he flung it away with a howl of displeasure. Joel, the joker, had been heating it in the fire till the moment before Addison entered, when he had removed it with the tongs.

"What's the matter there?" cried the master. "You act as if that was hot!"

Addison did not reply, but proceeded to cool the ends of his finger and thumb for a time, then took out his books, quite as if nothing had happened and without showing any signs of temper. Nevertheless, Theodora and I thought it likely that this prank would have to be settled for before school was done. Addison was not the boy to let such a trick as that go unrequited.

As much as a week passed; other jokes were perpetrated, so many that the master himself may have forgotten that one; it was merely one of many such.

About this time two pigs were slaughtered at the Old Squire's, and the afternoon following, Addison went home from school at recess, to assist Gram in the task of preparing what she called "souse," or head cheese, from the heads and other minor parts of the two porkers. For this service the old lady much preferred Addison to the girls, or hired help. He had a taste for dissection and understood how to remove the flesh from the bone of the head, as also what parts it was better to save, and what to reject. So Addison was called home as assistant souse-maker.

While thus employed an idea appears to have occurred to him; for in addition to this other labor, that afternoon, he carefully removed the eyes of one of the pigs from their bony sockets.

From an anatomist's point of view this is an interesting thing to do; but from the ordinary standpoint, the

eyes of any such animal are unsightly and of frightful appearance to many. Moreover, the eye is a larger organ when its entire globe is exposed than would appear to the ordinary observer who sees only the front portion of it in life.

Having removed the eyes with much care and attention to details, Addison first washed them in pickle, then wired them together and proceeded to roll them up in thickness after thickness of brown paper, till a package as large as one's fist had been formed. This he then secured carefully with several wrappings of twine and laid aside.

It was Joel's custom, while sitting indoors at the Old Squire's, to wear a loose, green jacket; but on setting off for school, he put on a dark gray sack coat and his overcoat. Just before he donned these garments, next morning, to go to school, Addison privately slipped his package into the pocket of this sack coat. Joel put it on hastily as usual, then put on the overcoat and went to school. About an hour after school had begun, while the algebra class was at the blackboard and Joel was walking up and down the floor, he chanced to put his hand into that pocket of the sack coat, when his fingers came in contact with the package. Addison, who had kept a curious eye to his movements, observed that he stopped in his walk, and, as he felt the package over in his pocket, appeared to be pondering as to what it could be. He turned a little aside, and taking it from his pocket, looked at it curiously, as if still pondering what it was and when or for what purpose he had put it there. Apparently he could not think what it was, but he dropped it back into his pocket, and for some time paid no further attention to it.

But it was plain that it bothered his mind still, for Addison saw his hand steal into that pocket several times, during the next fifteen or twenty minutes.

At last curiosity gained the ascendency and taking advantage of a spare moment, while the next class

was working at the blackboard, he sat down behind his desk and, after a glance around the room, to make sure that matters were going on well and that all were properly attending to their studies, he again drew forth the package and, having cut the string with his knife, began unrolling the paper. Thickness after thickness was removed; and a whimsical expression of curiosity and "can't-for-the-life-of-me-remember-what-this-is" overspread his countenance.

On a sudden, with the removal of the last thickness of paper, the two pig's eyes were left in his hand, grim, raw and staring up in his face!

The denouement would no doubt have startled almost any one; and it so startled Joel that he uttered a suppressed exclamation and threw them clean out of his hand over the desk and the melodeon into the floor!

Every one in the room looked up at once. There lay the pig's eyes on the floor, and there stood the master, looking hard at them. What it was all about no one, except Addison, could for a time even guess. First one, then another, began to laugh, till the room was in an uproar.

Yet still we did not fully understand it.

Joel took up the horrible objects with two sticks from the wood-box, and threw them in the stove. He made no remark, but after the tumult had subsided, went on with the algebra lesson; yet the affair had flustered him considerably, as we could all see.

Addison said nothing; but Joel no doubt soon guessed to whom he was indebted for the prank. He was almost inclined to feel offended at first, I think, for he scarcely spoke to Addison during the day, but by evening they were as friendly as ever. On reflection Joel probably concluded that it was not much more than a fair offset to the hot "specimen." He had thrown the pig's eyes even farther than Addison had the stone.

A few evenings afterwards Thomas, Catherine and

the Wilbur young folks were at the Old Squire's, and in an interval of study in the sitting-room, we began to put catch-questions, riddles and conundrums. This had been going on a few minutes, when Addison suddenly asked, "What is hotter than a hot stone?" Every one laughed at this; but a fit answer was not at once forthcoming from any one, till little Wealthy piped up, "A dead pig's eye!"

There was a shout. Joel shook his head with mock solemnity, and said, "Let's go to studying again."

CHAPTER XI

LATIN AND THE CONSTITUTION

ALTHOUGH I have spoken so much of these whimsical occurrences, it must not be concluded that we occupied our time to any great extent with them. In reality we were studying very ambitiously. With all of Master Pierson's peculiarities, there was in him a profound sense of the importance of education. A student himself, he was a constant example to us. What he sought constantly to impress on our minds was that education is the one needful condition to success in life; that the way to acquire it is to study unsparingly; and that all we could learn was really worth the effort it cost us.

In geography his maps and globe were a great help. Enthusiastic lessons were recited from those maps. The text-book at that time was *Colton and Fitch's Geography*. The class finished it in eight weeks. Although I had studied geography previously, I never really knew much of it, or took much interest in it till that winter. When that term closed there was not a question in the text-book which any one of our class of seven could not answer. Master Joel stated this to Mr. Furness, the visiting member of the school committee, when he visited the school the day before the term closed. Mr. Furness was a little inclined to doubt so broad an assertion and spent twenty minutes in questioning us rapidly at hap-hazard over the book. But no one failed to give a correct answer. At length he closed the book and, turning to the master, ex-

claimed, "I think you are right. It's really remarkable. You must have worked hard with them."

"Oh, no," said Joel, laughing, "they are the ones who have worked. They've had ambition."

That was quite true; we had an ambition to learn everything in that book; and even now, after forty years, those questions and answers, as also the countries, islands, seas and oceans of those large wall maps, are fast in my memory. The great merit of Master Pierson lay in that he was somehow able to kindle such an ambition to learn, for learning's sake.

Eight weeks of school, with a few evening spelling-matches and an examination to which the parents were invited, passed quickly; yet we felt that we had really grown, mentally, since Christmas; and now the question arose, how we should expend the money which remained over from our effort to raise funds in December.

Theodora argued — and I now think she was right — that it would be more generous and better to add the money to the general school fund, and have school for all in the district, by just so much longer. This plan was the more advisable, since, although there had been some dissent at first, nearly every pupil in the district was now interested and learning well. Scarcely any one expressed aught save regret that school was so soon to close.

But Addison and Thomas said, "No-sir-ee!"

"They would not help us. They fought it, or at least Tibbetts and his party did. They tried to keep us from hiring Joel. If they could have legally stopped us they would have done so. And now do you think we will agree to share the money that we worked to get with them! No-sir-ee!" That was the way Addison summed up the case.

And Thomas cried, "Right you are! Let them pack up their books now and go home. They did not want school enough to work a day for it. Let them

go without it now, I say. We will have a nice little private term, all by ourselves, in our own part of the district."

It is perhaps regrettable, but natural, that the most of our party sided with Addison and Thomas.

Theodora urged the more magnanimous way; Catherine did not express an opinion, but voted with Thomas and Addison.

As for Joel he declared that it was not a question for him to decide; and he declined to advise us. "Settle it," he said, "in the way that seems best to the majority who earned the money."

Addison was not wholly unaffected by Theodora's argument, however; for he was by no means an unusually selfish boy. On the last day of school, at recess in the afternoon, he made a few remarks.

"We have got twenty-eight dollars of money left over from the sixty dollars or more which we earned before the last part of the school began," he said to the others. "Now what we propose, is to have a short private school which Master Pierson has agreed to teach. But of course it is to be for those who helped earn the money. Those who refused to help do anything, cannot expect to share in it. But I will tell you what we will do. There are more of you, out at the Corners and thereabouts, than there are of us, in the upper part of the district. If you will raise twenty-eight dollars among you, to put alongside ours, we will go in together and have five weeks more of school here at the schoolhouse. What say to that?"

Several said that they would like to do so, and I think that some effort was made that evening to raise the required sum by means of a subscription paper, but nothing came of it.

"Well, Doad, I made them a square offer to go in share and share with them," Addison remarked at the supper table that night, after school was done and we had brought our books home. He then laughingly

related what he had proposed to the Corners' boys. But for some reason his tone and manner irritated Theodora.

"Ad, you knew all the time that they wouldn't or couldn't raise the money!" she exclaimed. "I do not think your 'square offer,' as you call it, amounted to anything whatever. It was just a piece of hard selfishness!"

Joel laughed; Addison laughed, too.

"To be honest," said he, "I am just as selfish as that looks. I do not think I would give that old rum-seller, Tibbetts, one dollar of this money of ours to save his life. Perhaps I would if the case came up, but I do not feel this moment as if I would."

"But it isn't Tibbetts wholly," rejoined Theodora. "It is our schoolmates from all that part of the district."

"They all had their chance to do something a month ago. I asked them and even urged them to join in with us and help us," replied Addison. "They were too lazy, or wrong-headed to help us. They had their chance. They refused."

"But they were ill-advised at the time. They thought of course that their parents were in the right," interposed Theodora.

"Let it be a lesson to them for next time, then," rejoined Addison. "They will remember it the better."

The matter rested there.

That evening we canvassed the question where we should have our private school.

"If we try to have it at the schoolhouse," said Addison, "there will be a fuss. Tibbetts will say we shall not use it for private schools; and I think it likely he could make trouble on that ground. We may take it for granted that he will, if he can.

"Gram," he continued, after a glance at Theodora and Ellen, and putting on as innocent an expression

as he could summon, "what do you say to letting us have the sitting-room for a schoolroom, a fortnight — just for nine or ten of us, you know?"

The old lady did not appear very well pleased with the proposition. "I guess my rag carpet would suffer," said she. "A fine racket you would kick up in there!"

"I will promise to make them behave themselves, Mother," Joel remarked.

"And we will have some good mats at the door to scrub their feet on when they come in," said Ellen.

"Don't talk that fine stuff to me!" exclaimed Gram. "I know very well what would happen. By spring I would have to make another carpet."

"We will sew the rags, Gram," said Ellen and Wealthy.

"Oh, yes, you would sew a dozen balls, no doubt, but when it came to sewing enough for a carpet for that great room some one else would have to take a hand, I guess."

"Well, it is only for two weeks and a half, Gram," Addison reminded her. "I guess we would not do a great deal of damage in that time."

"Gram, we might spread down a lot of mats, those kitchen mats," said Theodora. "Or else some burlap. We could tack down three or four strips of it all along where we sat."

"Yes, yes, Ruth," interposed the Old Squire. "They cannot do much harm in that time. And if they do wear the old house out a little, it is in a good cause."

Gram would not consent at once, however. "I will think about it," she asid. But we were well aware the cause was won; she never objected afterwards.

An even more important question came up the same evening and the following day, as to what new studies we should take up. Thomas and Catherine had come, also Ned and his sisters, Georgie and Elsie.

Addison's mind was already made up. "I shall begin Latin, sure," he said. "Joel is a good teacher for it. I never shall have a better chance, and I have always meant to study it."

Theodora was not so certain; Catherine and Thomas, too, were in doubt about Latin.

"Suppose it will ever do a fellow any good?" Thomas queried.

"Oh, yes," replied Joel, confidently. "Of course, it makes a difference what you intend doing later in the way of an education and what pursuits you are going to follow in life. If you are intending to get a college education, you must have Latin, and the sooner you begin the better. It will do you good, anyhow, but most good the higher you aim to rise in life."

"But the trouble with me is," said Thomas, "I don't know yet whether I will get an education, or not. I don't know whether I can or not. Father cannot send me to college. If I go, I shall have to pay my own way, and so will Kate. Father isn't able and he doesn't think any great things of colleges. But I would like to go," Thomas added. "Do you suppose I could go alone?"

"Why, look at me!" cried Joel. "Nobody has sent me. I have been in college three years and expect to get through all right, and not much in debt. You can do it as easy as I can. Why, a fellow who tried to tire out a circulating decimal, ought not to be discouraged at anything!"

"Oh, I don't know that I am discouraged," replied Thomas, reflectively. "I rather think I could do it if I were to start in for it. But I don't think I know exactly yet whether I want to or not. I cannot seem to think it out. I'm not so sure of it as Ad here is. He appears to know just what he wants to do."

"That was my own experience," said Joel: "I think that most young folks feel uncertain at first. But a

good way to get certain is to begin studying and go ahead awhile. It opens before you and you soon begin to feel sure what you want to do."

Those were very encouraging words to me, for like Thomas, I felt wholly uncertain, even doubtful, and experienced also a certain distaste for the hard study I felt sure was in store for me, if I tried to get a good education.

Meantime Catherine and Theodora had been conferring earnestly together on the subject, more from a girl's point of view, I suppose. I think they were confiding and comparing their aspirations one with another; Georgie and Elsie joined in their conversation. As for Ned he declared that he did not expect to go to college, but he said that he should like to study Latin awhile and go three or four terms at the village Academy; and that was Elsie's plan as well as Georgie's. They meant to acquire education sufficient to teach. At that time, however, Ned had a great desire to become a locomotive engineer and run trains on a railroad. Thomas, on the contrary, declared that he meant to be a civil engineer and build railroads. "I shall get big pay," he exclaimed. "Maybe I shall take contracts and make a fortune out of them. It's done, every year!" he added.

"Good for you, Thomas!" cried Joel, approvingly. "You are just the boy to do it, too. You have got the pluck and the health, if you do not injure it. You are just the fellow to build railroads all over the world. Go ahead and get the outfit to do it, Thomas!"

Under this stimulating praise Thomas straightened up and looked as resolute as a youthful Zouave. Still, he was not a boy to be taken off his feet by mere praise, and fell to deliberating again.

"What do you say to Latin?" Joel at length asked me.

"I don't know," was all the reply I had ready. It seemed to me that I didn't know anything, for certain.

The Old Squire had come into the sitting-room and was giving a quiet ear to our talk, behind his newspaper. I made it in my way to steal over to him and in a lowered tone asked, "Had I better, sir?"

The old gentleman looked at me kindly for some moments. "Do you want to?" he asked.

"I don't know whether I do or not," said I.

The Old Squire smiled. "Joel," said he, "he doesn't know and I don't know, do you know?"

"Yes," cried Joel, who was in one of his enthusiastic moods. "Study it, by all means."

"But Pierson," continued the old gentleman more gravely, "all men cannot be lawyers, doctors and ministers. Some must be farmers and mechanics. What makes you so sure that it will be best for this boy to study the higher branches? He will have his own way to make as it looks now, in the course of a few years more. Will it be worth his while to try to secure what you call a higher education? He is just a decently bright boy, nothing more, and will have to face the world for himself."

"If he is going to make a farmer, or a carpenter, or even a stone mason, I advise him to study Latin, all the same!" exclaimed Joel, bringing his fist down emphatically on the table. "I may be a farmer myself, and I know I can make all the better one for knowing Latin and geometry. I can hold a plough all the better for it. I don't believe in higher education for a few persons, merely; I believe in higher education, the very best that can be given them, for every boy and girl in America. Depend on it, Squire, Latin will never *hurt him a bit!*"

"Pierson, you are a man of great faith!" exclaimed the old gentleman, smiling. He seemed to ponder awhile, took up his paper again, then turned to me and said, "My son, you asked my advice. If you feel at all like studying Latin, I would do it."

That was good brave advice from a Maine farmer,

sixty-five years old, who had never enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education himself. I have often thanked the Old Squire in my heart for it since; I felt that he thought I had better study it; I determined to do so and resolved, too, that I would prove to him that he was not in the wrong about me.

A kind of Latin fever seized upon us all that evening. To many it will seem somewhat absurd, that a dozen boys and girls, only fairly well advanced in their common school studies, should all set themselves to study Latin.

Gram said a little brusquely that she believed that it was all nonsense.

"Oh, no, it isn't, Mother!" cried Joel, cheerily. "You will live to see them profiting by it."

"But I don't want to see these granddaughters of mine all growing up school-marms!" cried the old lady, bluntly. "I want them to grow up into sensible young women, and get married and raise good large healthy families, as girls should. The folks all round here are dying out. No children growing up! One or two little pindling things in a family only! The trouble is now that our girls aren't good for anything. Heads full of ideas about higher education! No health, no motherly feelings in them. If this sort of thing goes on fifty years more, there will be nobody left of us hereabouts. All dead and nobody left in their places. I know that cannot be right, Joel Pierson."

When Gram got started on an argument of that sort, she was quite apt to give utterance to energetic language.

"Well, now, Mother, you are partly right about that," said Joel. "But your girls look nice and healthy. Mother, dear, where you make your mistake is in supposing that education will injure girls. Education will, on the whole, always make girls and boys better and stronger men and women. If girls have any wrong ideas in their heads, as you say, they

did not get there from studies such as I now recommend, but from some other source."

"Maybe they didn't come from Latin, exactly," Gram assented. "But I am not sure of it," she added.

Whether the old lady was right or even partly right, we young folks all agreed with Joel. Little Wealthy was, of course, too young for so hard a branch of study; but Ellen decided that she should join the class. Even Halstead announced jocosely, that if all the others were going in for Latin, he should. "For," said he, "if they all know how to talk it and I don't, they will be making remarks about me which I can't understand." Halse had not yet grasped the idea that Latin is a dead language, not much used for colloquial purposes. Joel did not urge him to take up Latin. He felt doubtful in Halstead's case, I imagine; and again the Old Squire looked up from his paper and appeared perplexed; but he said nothing more. I fancy that he did not like to seem, by objecting in Halstead's case, to single him out as the only one in the family who was unfit.

It was really a difficult case. The old gentleman, too, was pondering other things. There was another study which he felt the importance of, one which he had often mentioned to us during that summer of vexatious political questions. He now saw his chance to urge it more effectively, and again laid down his paper.

"Is Latin chosen?" he asked.

"Yes," we said.

"Unless you object, sir," Theodora added, dutifully.

"Then I object," the Old Squire said.

There were blank looks from all of us. Master Pierson seemed disappointed; he also appeared vexed.

"I object — for a week," the Old Squire continued, at which all our faces brightened a little.

"First, before you begin on Latin, I want you to take a week for something else," the old gentleman

went on. "One week of good hard study. Then I agree to Latin."

"But what is it?" Master Pierson asked, not wholly satisfied.

"The Constitution of the United States," replied the Old Squire, his eye kindling.

"Well, sir, that's no bad idea," Joel assented.

"Before you go off on Latin and Greek, I want you to put in a week on the Constitution and the first principles of our government," the Old Squire repeated. "I think you will always be glad you did it. I am sure it will be of use to you all your lives. You will be the better citizens for it, you boys especially. It will help you decide how to vote, when you come to vote, and vote more intelligently."

The Old Squire belonged to the same generation as Daniel Webster, and was a great believer in the Constitution. He reverenced it, and he thought that every young citizen ought to be thoroughly instructed in it, from the time he is ten years old.

"But will that be of much use to us girls?" Catherine ventured to inquire.

"Yes, indeed," the Old Squire rejoined. "Girls as well as boys. The girls are the future mothers of the nation; and every mother should be able to instil in her children the first great principles of American free government."

The old gentleman waxed earnest. "Pierson," he exclaimed, "I want you to go into this thoroughly — one whole week. I will help what I can. Let's begin with Magna Charta, that first great guarantee of Anglo-Saxon rights, that sturdy declaration of English manhood." He felt what he was saying so deeply, that he rose suddenly and took a turn across the wide old sitting-room.

"Pierson," he exclaimed again, "with all this foreign immigration of every nation and every race which is pouring into America, I am sometimes afraid

that we are in grave danger of losing our birthright and forgetting the noble stock from which we have sprung. But I don't want these boys, nor these girls, ever to lose sight of it, or ever forget it."

The Old Squire's zeal fired Joel who was, himself, of Anglo-Saxon descent. "You're right, sir, right every time," he exclaimed. "Fetch on the Constitution and Magna Charta behind it. We cannot do better. We will put in a week on it. We will start school here with that."

Among the books in the old mahogany bookcase against the wall of the farmhouse sitting-room, there was *An American Family Atlas,* containing the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, also the Mecklenburg Declaration (which many hold to be the germ of American liberty) and an epitome of Magna Charta.

The Old Squire also owned a copy of Pomeroy's *Constitutional Law,* which contains the Constitution, Article by Article. It was also at the back of a former small *School History of the United States*, and in another small volume, entitled *Lives of American Statesmen.*

Catherine and Thomas, too, were able to bring from home another *School History of the United States,* containing the Constitution. We mustered five copies of the great document; and next morning our week's study of it and its prototypes began in earnest.

I have to confess that to me, at that age, this whole week's study was rather abstruse and uninteresting, or would have been but for the fun that went with it and the zeal of the others. Perhaps almost any average boy, not very keen and not wholly studiously inclined, would have found it as dull as I did. It was unusually hard for me to remember the different Articles and Sections of the Constitution. I did not at all grasp the meaning of some of them; they were merely so many hard words and sentences. Yet in after life

I have found those same abstruse sentences coming back to me in a strangely new light, illumined by my older understanding of things, and have frequently blessed my fortunate star that I pored over them till they were thus early and indelibly woven into the plastic web of memory. In good truth, the Old Squire made no mistake when he insisted on that week's work.

We began with Magna Charta — the great Charter of civic rights which the English people wrested from their kings, particularly King John, and were compelled to depose one king and cut off the head of another before these pampered, royal egotists could be brought to respect popular rights and yield to constitutional law.

We did not possess a complete copy of Magna Charta. There was a digest of it with quotations in the *Family Atlas* above mentioned; and two years previously the Old Squire had been induced — rather against Gram's wishes — to invest in an Encyclopedia Britannica, which contains (Vol. V, pp. 431-432, Vol. VIII, pp. 306-308) an account of Magna Charta, its origin and general purport.

To these sources of information we now had recourse, Addison and Theodora reading them over aloud, the rest listening — trying hard to remember. If I recollect aright this was read aloud four times, the first day, for I recall that Catherine read it once, and that Master Pierson read it, remarking particularly the points we had best make notes of, and fix in memory.

"Let's get it well fixed," he exclaimed more than once that day. "I mean to do so. This is just what I need myself."

For much of the time, too, the Old Squire sat by, now and then throwing in a word of advice or exhortation, on his own account.

Next day we labored on the Declaration of Independence, Mecklenburg Declaration, and the Articles

of Confederation whereby the thirteen Colonies and Plantations were organized as The United States. The Old Squire was at considerable pains to describe to us the very prominent part borne by Thomas Jefferson in framing the Declaration of Independence. He held that Jefferson was second only to Washington among the early American statesmen. He did not wish us to spend any great amount of time on the Articles of Confederation, however, and bade us take care not to confound them in any way with the Constitution, nor mix them up with it.

On the third morning we began the Constitution of the United States. To me at the time, it was hard and dry. I did not comprehend it clearly, nor see the reason or use of it. Master Pierson, perceiving my difficulty, helped me not a little by explaining the tyrannous government of the American Colonies, under the Crown of England, and, in general, the servile condition of mankind before free, self-government by the people began, not only in America but in England. He simplified the matter by telling us how few rights people had in former days, and how unjustly they were sometimes imprisoned or put to death, and how arbitrarily their property was seized by kings, or their favorites.

Addison first read the Preamble of the Constitution, twice, slowly, then the whole of Article I. It seemed to me I could never remember it; and Tom whispered to me that he knew he never could. Ellen sat looking equally helpless; Theodora, too, was knitting her brows; while Halse sat grinning and shuffling his feet.

"You have heard it," Master Pierson said, when Addison had finished. "Sounds formidable. But now let's all take the books and study it an hour, by the clock, and let our eyes help our ears with it."

Books were laid hold of, and I recall that I went over Article I twice in that hour, trying very hard to remember each Section as I read it. Some of the Sec-

tions were not easy to understand, and therefore very hard to recollect. "Gummy!" Thomas whispered. "It's just so many long strings of words. How's a fellow going to get all this by heart?" It seemed to me I never could; but in point of fact, I found myself recalling far more of it afterwards than I thought I should. Section VII and Section X gave me most trouble.

"Recess for fifteen minutes!" Master Pierson cried when that hour was up. "Let's run out and snowball. My brain is getting fuzzy!"

It was indeed "fuzzy" work for young brains. We rushed forth and for some time such whoops rose about the old farmhouse and barns, that Gram declared our neighbors must think there was a fire.

The Old Squire stood at the wagon-house door and laughed to see us tear around and hurl light snow in each other's faces.

"Pierson, is that the way you keep school?" he cried.

"Surely," the master cried back, his own hair full of snow. "Brains need fresh air when they are grappling with the Constitution!"

Well blown and freshened, we went back indoors.

"Now let's change back from eyes to ears," Joel said. "Catherine, please read Article I to us once more. Let's sit and hear it again — and soak it into our heads. Mine needs a lot of soaking."

Catherine read it again, slowly; and I found that I was now getting hold of it a little better.

We had an intermission of an hour and a half that day, the work was so hard. In the afternoon Article II and Article III were read, studied and re-read, in the same way as Article I. But these were much shorter; they also seemed far easier to me.

Snow had begun to fall; and our afternoon recess was spent up at the west barn, playing a game of "gool" on the long floor. I recollect that Thomas

succeeded in "going around," and therefore won the game for his side, by climbing over the "great beams" far up in the roof of the barn.

On the whole that first day's struggle with the Constitution was a rather enjoyable one. I recall, however, that by evening my head felt as if I had worked it strenuously and shaken out several new convolutions of brain.

Next morning we began at eight o'clock, taking up Articles IV, V, VI, and VII in the same way as yesterday's lesson. These latter Articles are so brief, however, that we easily finished them during the forenoon, and in the afternoon proceeded to the Amendments of the Constitution, the first thirteen brief Articles of which had already been adopted by Congress and appended to the original document. Articles XIV and XV had not then been devised, and were not added to the other Amendments until 1868 and 1870.

That evening we had a review of our two days' work. "To-morrow," Master Pierson said, "we must have a grand Quiz."

That was a word we had never heard before. It was a new word which had recently come in vogue at colleges and law schools. Joel, then a student at Bates College, had heard it there, and now explained it to us.

"We will hold a Quiz at eight to-morrow morning," said he. "Catherine may quiz us on Magna Charta, and ask every question she can think of. That will be good practice for the quizzer as well as the quizzed."

The Old Squire came in while this was being talked of. "But there is one thing more," said he, "which I wish you to take up in connection with the Constitution and its Amendments. You will hear a great deal about it in time to come. It will give rise to many difficult, delicate questions in regard to our foreign relations."

"Why, what is it, Gramp?" Ellen exclaimed.

"I wonder whether any of you can guess?" the Old Squire queried, with a twinkle of his eye.

No one spoke at once.

"I rather think I could give a surmise," Joel remarked, at length. "I suppose you refer to the Monroe Doctrine. But I confess I have no very clear idea as to it," he added.

"Few have," replied the Old Squire, smiling. "And yet it is something which is sure to loom up large in the future history of this country. Here it is," he continued, taking up the *Atlas*. "Here is the original form of it, as given to the people during the administration of President Monroe. It is quoted from his Message to Congress, bearing date of December 2d, 1823. Read it aloud, Pierson. Let's see what we can make of it."

The master read the three long paragraphs.

"Dear me, isn't that a mixture?" cried Catherine, looking perplexed.

"It does sound badly twisted up," Addison said. "Master Pierson, can you put that into plainer English and less words?"

Joel shook his head. "I would much rather hear my seniors speak," he said with a glance at the Old Squire. "Expound it, sir."

"Well, the Monroe Doctrine has had a great many expounders," the latter rejoined. "Politicians and even great statesmen have disagreed as to its proper interpretation. President Monroe was not quite as clear, perhaps, as he might have been. Yet a great principle of our future national policy was set forth by him. I have read that part of his Message, time and again, and what I make of it is this:

"That America, both North and South America, is for Americans, and cannot properly be invaded, held, or controlled by nations of the Eastern Hemisphere, whether of Europe or Asia.

"That the United States as the largest, strongest

republic of America, should display fraternal sympathy for the smaller, weaker republics of Central and South America and should protect them from aggression and invasion, especially when the invaders seek to conquer them and overthrow free government by the people — as when France attempted to conquer Mexico, in 1863, and establish a monarchy there under the Emperor Maximilian, of Austria. In such cases it will always be proper for us to intervene in behalf of the weaker American republic.

"But that such moral aid, or intervention, on the part of the United States should be made only for the protection and maintenance of free institutions and free government by the people, and not in aid of selfish dictators, styling themselves Presidents, when they seek to evade payment of just debts, by relying on our assistance, thereby making us party to dishonesty.

"In all such cases — as recently in Venezuela and Guatemala — the United States may well stand aside and allow a foreign nation to take reasonable steps to collect what is justly due its citizens, as long as these measures do not subvert free government, nor rob an American republic of territory.

"That, at least, is my idea of it," the Old Squire added modestly. "My view of it is, that the Monroe Doctrine is to protect and foster free government by the people throughout the Western Hemisphere, and also to safeguard the future interests of the United States."

"Much obliged to you, sir," Master Pierson exclaimed. "You have made this much clearer to me than it ever was before; — and I believe in the Monroe Doctrine."

It was so bitterly cold the next morning, that Ned and his sisters did not come. Willis, too, was prevented from coming, and Alfred failed to put in an appearance. Eight o'clock, however, saw the rest of us gathered in the sitting-room for the Quiz. "Go

ahead, Catherine," Addison exclaimed. "It will not take you long to find out how little I know."

Catherine appeared somewhat embarrassed, at first. "I am not fit to 'quiz,'" she said.

"Oh, go on," cried Joel. "We are all learners here. One is as fit as another."

"Well, then, Addison, what is Magna Charta? What does it mean, and when and where did it originate?"

"It means Great Charter, from the Latin words *magna*, great, and *charta*, paper or document," Ad responded, smiling broadly. "It marked the beginning of constitutional government among the English people, and was for England what our Constitution is for the United States. Our Constitution is founded on it. It was granted by King John, in the year 1213, over six hundred and fifty years ago, at a place called Runnymede."

"Was King John willing to grant it? Ellen may answer."

"Not a bit willing. He opposed it and fought against it for two years."

"Who compelled the King to grant it? Master Pierson may answer that," Catherine continued.

"The Barons of England, the Prelates of the church and other representatives of the English people," Joel replied.

As I was sitting near the master, the next question fell to me and found me unprepared. "In what language was Magna Charta written?"

"English," I hazarded.

"Wrong," cried Thomas, Addison and several other voices, in a breath, and Theodora, sitting next beyond me, whispered, "Latin."

"No telling in Quiz!" shouted Joel. "I overheard that. Yes, it was in Latin. In those days nearly all important documents, discourses and books were composed in the Latin language. That is one reason

why we need to study it now, because it was the literary language of our forefathers and has come down to us in Law, Theology, Medicine and Science generally."

"Halstead, how many Articles did Magna Charta contain?" Catherine asked next.

"Fifty," said he.

"Wrong!" cried everybody in concert. "Sixty-one."

"Theodora, which are the most important?"

"The Thirty-ninth and the Fortieth."

Just then the Old Squire came in, looking much interested. "Can any of you repeat those two Articles?" he inquired.

No one, not even Master Pierson, could do so, either in the original Latin, or as quaintly translated in the later English statutes, and they were at length read aloud by Addison: —

"Article 39th. No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or be disseized of his freehold, or liberties, or free customs, or be otherwise destroyed, nor will we press upon him, nor seize upon him but by lawful judgment of his peers, or by the laws of the land."

"That is where trial by jury came in," the Old Squire remarked.

"Article 40th." (Addison continued.) "We will sell to no man, we will not deny nor defer to any man, either right or justice."

"What else does Magna Charta provide for, in the way of liberty to the people?" Catherine asked.

"Open courts and witnesses for the trial of offenses," Joel mentioned.

"The right to make wills and leave one's property as he chooses," the Old Squire mentioned.

"Protection against illegal seizure of one's goods for debt," Theodora remembered.

"'And even the villein and the rustic shall not be

deprived of his necessary chattels,'" Thomas quoted. "But I wish somebody would tell me what a 'villein' is," he added. "Is it the same as villain which means a ruffian?"

Master Pierson set him right. "Not exactly that, Thomas," said he. "As then used, the word villein meant a man in servitude, a thrall, or farm-servant. Previously these poor fellows had had no rights which their masters were bound to respect. Magna Charta secured proper legal rights for them, as well as for their betters."

"And that is precisely why it is such a grand document," the Old Squire added very earnestly.

We went on to the Declaration of American Independence and Theodora was called upon to quiz on it; but since, after the grand opening paragraphs, it consists largely of accusations against King George and his ministers, not many questions of interest were asked. The Old Squire wished us chiefly to remember that it was written by Thomas Jefferson at Philadelphia, and amended by suggestions from Benjamin Franklin and others of the fifty-five or fifty-seven original signers; and that when some of those who signed were slow to put their names to a paper so resolute and so unflattering to the British king, Franklin remarked dryly, by way of exhortation, that this was a case where they must all hang together, or they would surely hang separately!

After recess, therefore, we went on to the Constitution, and Addison was appointed Quiz-master for Article I.

"Who can repeat the Preamble?" was his first question.

A far from unanimous or distinct mumble of voices followed. Neither Halstead nor I got in half the words in their proper places.

"Master Pierson, who framed the Constitution?" Addison queried.

"A Convention of fifty-five delegates from the States, which met in Philadelphia, May 14th, 1787."

"Catherine, can you name any of the celebrated men who were in that Convention?"

"Yes; Washington, Madison, Randolph, Franklin, Rufus King, Alexander Hamilton, Pinckney, Rutledge. Washington presided."

"Halstead, did they easily agree on the present Constitution?"

"No; they wrangled over it."

"Wrangled is hardly the proper word," the Old Squire remarked. "It was a very difficult task and of course there were many different opinions. There were two plans for a constitution somewhat opposed to each other. The remarkable feature is that the delegates harmonized their views and framed so wise a document."

"Thomas, when was the Constitution adopted by the Convention?"

"In September, 1787. But the different States were slow to ratify it. A year or more passed before all the States accepted it. For six months the country was without any legal government. But great and good old General George Washington had his paw on the throttle, all the same. If anybody had started to make trouble, they would have heard from George."

"Theodora, under the Constitution in whom is the power to make laws vested?"

"In Congress."

"Ellen, of what does Congress consist?"

"Two branches, the Senate and the House of Representatives."

Willis, Ned Wilbur and Alfred now came in and took their places.

"Edgar, by whom are the Representatives to Congress elected?" Addison asked.

"By the voters, all the legal voters in each State, just as we vote for Governor."

"Willis, for how long a term?"

"Two years."

"Master Pierson, how many people does a Representative to Congress represent?"

"The number was set at thirty thousand at first. It is much larger now. A new rate is established, after the Census is taken, every ten years, as population increases."

Gram had come to the door to speak with the Old Squire and Addison roguishly cried, "Ruth, how many Senators is each State entitled to have in Congress and how are they elected?"

"Two," said the old lady promptly. "They are appointed for six years by the State Legislature which contrives to appoint about whom it likes, whether the people like them or not. For my part I think the Senators ought to be voted for by the people at the polls, just as the Representatives are — and put a stop to so many rich men buying their way into Congress, and making laws to favor their own interests." Joel clapped his hands heartily.

"Why, Ruth, you are a revolutionist," the Old Squire cried, smiling. "You would subvert the Constitution."

"Joseph, you seem to think that old Constitution of yours is infallible. But it isn't. Why, Congress has had to be tinkering it and amending it ever since it was adopted. It needs it, too, and will go on needing it as the country grows. You can never make me worship the Constitution as you do. It has too many flaws in it."

"I suspect, Ruth, that one reason why you feel so little reverence for the Constitution, is because it does not ordain that women shall vote," the Old Squire remarked mischievously.

"Indeed it is," cried Gram warmly. "I think it is a shame that an American woman of fairly good education, who is the head of a household and owns prop-

erty, is not allowed the privilege of helping elect those who make the laws. I don't believe, either, that a man who hasn't these qualifications ought to vote. I don't believe in allowing people of bad character to vote, whether men or women."

Joel applauded still more vigorously. "Right you are, Mother, just right!" he cried. "Those are my sentiments to a dot! Good character is the best qualification for a voter. It is the first requisite to be insisted on. No drunkards, no criminals, no persons of bad morals ought to be allowed at the polls."

"Pierson, I'm afraid you are a rank female suffragist," the Old Squire said roguishly.

"Yes, I am — in that way," exclaimed Joel. "That is to say, I think the right to vote should depend on character and morals, not on sex. I do not think that sex should have anything to do with it."

After this very frank tilt at the existing state of things, Gram departed, victorious, to her household affairs, and Addison resumed his quizzing.

CHAPTER XII

THE QUIZ GOES ON

"THOMAS, how old must a Representative to Congress be, and what other qualifications must he have?" was the next question.

"Twenty-five years old," said Tom promptly. "He must have been seven years a citizen of the United States, and he must be a resident of the State which he represents."

"Master Pierson, does the word 'resident' mean that he must be a legal voter?" Addison asked.

Joel hesitated. "I suppose it does," he said. "I may be wrong."

"Catherine, if a Representative dies during his two years' term, or if he resigns, or is expelled from Congress, how is the vacancy to be filled?"

"The Governor and Council of the State from which he comes must issue a legal call for the election of a new Representative."

"Thomas, what important presiding officer does the House of Representatives have, and how is he chosen?"

"The Speaker of the House, and when he is a smart man he is the whole cheese. The Representatives elect him, themselves, by vote."

"What important powers are entrusted to the House of Representatives, Willis?"

Willis looked considerably puzzled. "The House of Representatives starts all the law-making, I believe," said he. "It proposes bills for all the new laws, but the Senate has to agree to them. They have

to be sent to the President to be signed, too, before they can become laws."

"What other power, Alfred?"

"Don't remember."

"Who does?"

"The sole power of impeachment," cried Thomas.

"Whom? Whom may it impeach?"

"Any United States officer, including the President and Vice-President," said Catherine.

"Halstead, how old must a Senator be and what other qualifications must he have?"

"Thirty years old; and he must have been a citizen of the United States nine years."

"What else — any one."

"He must be an inhabitant of the State which appoints him," said Joel.

"Does the word 'inhabitant' mean a legal voter?" Addison asked.

"I suppose it does," replied Joel.

"If a Senator dies during his term of office, or resigns, or is expelled from Congress, what then, Theodora?"

"The Legislature of his State shall fill the vacancy by electing a new Senator."

"But suppose the Legislature is not in session at the time, Ellen?"

"I don't remember."

"Any one?"

"The Governor of the State and his Council may appoint a successor, temporarily, till the Legislature is again in session," quoted Catherine with a sage gravity which made us all smile.

"In case the House of Representatives impeaches, that is, accuses, the President or the Vice-President of treason, or other crimes and misdemeanors, what is the duty of the Senate? You may answer that, sir," Addison continued, turning to the Old Squire.

"The Senate tries the case against him, acting as

a court under oath. But a two-thirds vote of all the Senators is required to convict him," the old gentleman replied promptly.

"Thomas, in case the President of the United States is being tried for treason, or other crimes, who presides meantime in the Senate?"

"The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States — till they decide whether 'Old Andy' is guilty or not."

"If pronounced guilty, what then, Master Pierson?"

"The Vice-President becomes President, quite as if the President had died."

"But suppose the President and Vice-President were both to die, or to be assassinated, what then?"

"Never has been such a sad case, but it is held that the Chief Justice would be President for the rest of the four years."

"Edgar, how often must Congress meet?"

"Once a year, on the first Monday of December."

"Must it meet then, whether it wishes to do so or not?"

"Yes," replied Ned.

"Doubted!" cried Ellen. "The Constitution says that Congress may, if it pleases, appoint a different date for assembling."

"Correct," said Addison. "Can there be more than one session of Congress in a year?"

"I believe not," Ellen replied rather doubtfully. But Catherine cried, "Wrong."

"Who, then, has power to call a second, or extra session, during the same year?"

"The President, if he deems it necessary."

"What is a quorum in Congress, Edgar?"

"A majority of members, either in the Senate or the House of Representatives."

"Catherine, what are both branches of Congress required to keep?"

"A Journal of their Proceedings, to be published from time to time."

"Must all proceedings of Congress be published?" Addison asked me, and I replied "Yes;" but the Old Squire said, "Wrong, my boy. Not if in the opinion of Congress certain proceedings ought to be kept secret."

"How are the proceedings of Congress generally published, Thomas?"

"In the Congressional Record."

"Can the Senate adjourn without the consent of the House of Representatives, or *vice versa?* Master Pierson may answer that."

"Yes, but not for more than three days, without the consent of the other Branch."

"Theodora, suppose a Bill, designed to become a law, passes both Houses of Congress, what is the next step to be taken?"

"It must be sent to the President for his approval and signature."

"Alfred, suppose the President does not approve it?"

"He can veto it. That stops it."

"What does 'veto' mean, Master Pierson?"

"Means *I forbid.*"

"But, Catherine, suppose Congress still believes the bill ought to become a law?"

"Congress, after getting the vetoed bill back from the President, with his objections to it, can by a two-thirds vote of both Branches, pass it again over the President's veto, and it will then become a law, despite the President's opposition."

"Correct, good girl. Theodora, name some of the duties and powers of Congress."

"To lay taxes and tariffs, and collect them. To pay government expenses and debts. To provide for the common defense and welfare of the country."

"Yes; what other powers, Willis?"

"Borrow money, if needed."

"What else, Edgar?"

"Regulate trade with foreign countries, and with the Indian tribes."

"Yes; what else?"

"To make laws for the naturalization of immigrants, and make regulations for bankruptcy cases."

"What else, Master Pierson?"

"To coin money and fix its value, also fix the values of foreign money; to set up standards of weights and measures. To capture and punish counterfeiters. To establish post offices and post roads."

"Who can name other powers of Congress?"

"To promote the progress of science and useful arts," said Catherine. "To grant patents to inventors and copyrights to authors."

"To establish United States Courts in the different States," cried the Old Squire, who was warming up in the Quiz. "To punish piracy and felony on the high seas; to capture pirates; to declare war against other nations; to raise armies and vote money for their support; to build and equip a navy."

Joel now declared that it was time for a recess.

"Oh, I like to be 'Quizzer!'" Addison exclaimed, after we were back in our places. "It saves me from exposing how little I know."

"Go on, then," said Joel, "you are doing well."

"Well, then, good Master Pierson, tell us all about the *Writ of Habeas Corpus*. What is it? To whom does it apply, and when may it be suspended?" cried Addison, grinning hugeously.

"My soul!" exclaimed Joel. "I'm sorry now I got you appointed Quiz-master. I would much rather ask that question, myself, than answer it."

"Do you give it up?" cried Addison, relentlessly.

"No," replied Joel. "But I've a good mind to. I will try to answer, but I want you to help me out, sir," he added, turning to the Old Squire.

"Oh, you are a Latin scholar and teacher," cried the latter, smiling broadly. "Every man to his trade."

"Well then, *habeas corpus* means *if you may have the body,* and refers to the body of a prisoner. But it is a law phrase and came from an enactment of English law, designed to protect the rights of a person under arrest, charged with crime, ensure him a fair trial and get him out of prison. Is that anywhere near right, sir?" Joel added, looking at the Old Squire.

"Well, yes," replied the latter, a little doubtfully. "A writ of *habeas corpus,* under our laws, may be issued by a court judge, compelling the authorities who have imprisoned a person on any charge, usually political, to produce his body for trial by his peers and state what his offenses are. It is designed to prevent a citizen from being unjustly imprisoned for a long time."

"What does the Constitution say about it?" Addison asked.

"It says that the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* shall not be suspended unless when, in cases of rebellion, or invasion, the public safety may require it," Joel replied.

"Glad that old sticker of a question didn't come to me," Thomas whispered; and so was I.

"Haven't we got about to Article II?" Willis asked.

"A hundred more questions might be asked on Article I," said Addison, "but we will go on to Article II. Willis, in whom is the executive power of the United States vested?"

"In the President, and the Vice-President, if the President dies or is removed from office."

"What are the duties of the Vice-President, Halstead?"

"Nothing but look on, as long as the President lives and is not impeached."

"Wrong," said Catherine. "He is president of the Senate when Congress is in session."

"What office does this correspond to in the House of Representatives?"

"The Speaker."

"Listen to the little pullet crow!" cried Halse, derisively.

"Be quiet, sir," said Master Pierson. "No back talk in Quiz."

"Master Pierson, can the President of the United States resign, after taking the oath of office?"

Joel looked nonplussed. "I give that up," said he. "No President ever has."

"I suppose he might have the right to do so," the Old Squire said. "Under certain circumstances, he would have the right, if, for example, he became hopelessly ill, or felt that his mental powers were leaving him."

"Catherine, what does *executive* mean, or rather, why is the President, or the Governor of a State, called the Executive?"

"Because he executes, or puts in force, the laws which Congress, or the State Legislature, enacts. Congress passes the laws, and the President sees that they are put in force."

"Halstead, how long does the President hold office?"

"Four years, or eight, if re-elected."

"Thomas, may a President be re-elected more than once, and serve twelve years instead of eight?"

"No case of it yet. Americans do not believe in that. Too much like a king, or a dictator."

"Edgar, how long does the Vice-President hold office?"

"Four years, same as the President."

"Ellen, how old must the President be when elected, and what other qualifications must he have?"

"Thirty-five years old. He must be a natural-born citizen of the United States and a resident for fourteen years in this country."

"Theodora, must the Vice-President have the same qualifications?"

"I think so," she replied.

"Master Pierson, how are the President and Vice-President elected?"

"By the people, that is, by popular vote of the legal voters of all the different States at the polls, every four years. That is the way the election begins, but after election is over, there comes a kind of after-clap in the shape of Electors who journey to Washington to form an Electoral college; as many Electors for each State as there are Senators and Representatives. Altogether it is the most clumsy method of election ever devised. It affords a fine field for politicians to pull wires, and has already made more trouble than any other part of the Constitution. I think it was a mistake on the part of the framers of the Constitution. It was amended by Congress in 1804 — the Twelfth Amendment — but the Amendment only complicated it worse."

"Pierson, you are rather severe," the Old Squire remarked. "The framers of the Constitution saw the necessity of having the President elected by vote of the States, rather than by an aggregate popular vote. They saw that it would not be fair to have one large populous section of the country, which chanced to favor some particular candidate, carry the election without proper regard for the wishes of other sections of the country, not as densely populated. I think they were right in that; but I grant that the method of choosing a President by means of Electors is not wholly simple, or free from faults. I suppose it was the best the framers of the Constitution could do, at that time."

"Alfred, do the President, Vice-President and Members of Congress receive pay for their services?"

"They all draw pay."

"Anything else? — Any one answer."

"Mileage, on the road to Washington," said Willis.

"In case of war with other nations, or rebellion, what military command does the President hold, Thomas?"

"He is commander-in-chief of the army and navy and can go on the battle-field, or on the flag-ship of the fleet, if he sees fit."

"Is it customary for him to do so?"

"No; he generally remains at Washington and leaves the fighting to his generals, admirals and captains."

"Master Pierson, can the President go off on the flag-ship of the navy, to fight the navy of another nation, in foreign waters?"

"I don't know as to his power to do that," said Joel. "He is not supposed to leave the country. It is not thought safe for him to do so."

"No; he ought not to do that!" exclaimed Thomas. "We want the 'Old Man' to stay at home and hold the reins."

"What oath of office does the President take, at the time he is inaugurated and takes his seat, on March 4th, after his election the previous November? Repeat it, Catherine."

"'I solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.'"

"Right. What important duty falls to the President from time to time? Theodora may answer."

"To issue a message to Congress and the country. It is a kind of report as to the state of the nation, telling what has happened, what has been done, and recommending such measures to Congress as the President deems necessary for the common good."

"Can you think of other Presidential duties?"

"He may have to make treaties with other nations, but the Senate must ratify them."

"He has to receive, officially, all foreign ministers and ambassadors," said Ellen.

"Yes; and he has to appoint ministers, ambassadors and consuls to foreign countries, but always with the advice and consent of the Senate," the Old Squire threw in.

"And he has to sign the commissions of all United States officers," Joel said.

"And choose his Cabinet of Secretaries and advisers," said Willis.

"He has plenty more duties, but they are involved with the proceedings of Congress," Addison remarked. "We will go on now to Article III. We have had the law-making powers of Congress and the executive powers of the President. What other branch is there of the United States government, Catherine?"

"The Supreme Court and State Supreme Courts."

"But what other name do we give that power?"

"The Judicial Power, or Judiciary."

"What are the duties of the Supreme Court of the United States, Theodora?"

"I am not certain about that," Theodora said. "But I think it is to try legal points under the Constitution, and decide what is Constitutional and what is not."

"Yes; anything else? Any one answer."

"This is our highest court and has jurisdiction over all United States laws," Joel said.

"And over questions involving our ambassadors, ministers and consuls abroad," the Old Squire remarked. "Also over maritime affairs, on the seas, and disputed law points between the different States, and over controversies between citizens of this country and foreign powers."

"How many Judges are there of the Supreme Court, Willis?"

"Three, or more."

"What is the title of the highest Judge?"

"The Chief Justice of the United States."

"By whom are the Judges of the Supreme Court appointed, Alfred?"

"By Congress."

"Wrong," cried Thomas. "By the President. But Congress, or the Senate, confirms them."

Alfred began talking back; but Master Pierson bade him keep still in Quiz, or go out.

"What is treason on the part of a citizen of the United States? Alfred, repeat what the Constitution says of it."

Alfred could not.

"Catherine, can you?"

"'Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.'"

"Good," cried Addison; but Halse undertook to crow like a hen. Thereupon the Old Squire sent him out of the room, to the wood-shed, to saw wood, and bade him be quiet out there, too.

"What is the punishment of treason, Willis?"

"Death."

"Doubted," said Thomas. "The Constitution doesn't say that. It says that Congress shall have the power to declare the punishment of treason."

"Article IV," Addison continued. "If a resident in any State commits a crime and escapes over the border into another State, can he thus go free of proper punishment, Edgar?"

"No."

"What may be done, Willis?"

"The Governor of the State he escapes to, must be asked to give him up, to be taken back and tried in the State where he committed the crime."

"What is this process called?"

"Extradition."

"How are new States admitted to the Union of the United States, Ellen?"

"By act of Congress."

"Can one of the States, as they now stand, be divided to make two States, or can two States be joined together to make one new one, Theodora?"

"Not without the consent of Congress."

"How is each State of the Union protected from foreign enemies, or from its own rebellious citizens, Master Pierson?"

"By the whole power of the United States, if necessary."

"Article V. Can the Constitution be changed, or amended, Alfred?"

"No."

"Wrong," exclaimed Thomas again. "The Constitution can be amended by a two-thirds vote of both Branches of Congress. The Legislatures of two-thirds of the States may also apply for amendments and get them enacted, if three-fourths of the States approve of them. But there are some restrictions about this which I have forgotten," Thomas added.

"They are not of much consequence, except as law points," the Old Squire remarked. "The main fact to keep in mind is, that the Constitution may be amended when real need arises for it."

"How many Articles of Amendment are there?" Addison asked me, and I was able to answer thirteen, the 14th and 15th having not yet been made.

"Catherine, what is the First Amendment?"

"It reads that 'Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the Government for the redress of grievances.'"

"Correct!" cried Addison. "I couldn't have repeated all that. What is the purport of the Second Amendment, Willis?"

"It gives to each State the right to maintain a militia."

"What is the purport of the Fourth Amendment, Ellen?"

"I am not sure."

"Any one?"

"It protects all citizens against unreasonable searches of their houses, and from seizures of their property," said the Old Squire.

"The other Amendments, up to the Thirteenth, are of interest to lawyers rather than to us, I think," Addison remarked. "But the Thirteenth is important. Theodora, what about it?"

"It abolishes slavery in the United States."

"Right. And that's all for the present from 'yours truly,'" said Addison, rising with a grand bow.

"Of course, I have not asked all the questions that might be put," Addison continued. "I haven't gone into it very deep. I have skimmed it over. Somebody else can quiz now."

It was Saturday, however, and getting late. The week was up, — the week for the Constitution, which the Old Squire had insisted on. He appeared satisfied. "You have done well," said he. "Remarkably well. I feel sure that this week's study will do you good all through life."

And looking back to that time, I can now say in good truth, that no week of study, on any branch, before or since, has been as useful to me in after life as those six days, spent on Magna Charta and the Constitution.

CHAPTER XIII

LATIN IN EARNEST

EARLY the following Monday Master Pierson drove to the village book store and purchased for us seven copies of *Andrews' Latin Lessons;* in fact, he bought the entire stock in hand at the store. It was a week later before we were all provided with books; but meanwhile we studied in pairs, Thomas and Catherine together, Theodora and Ellen, and Addison and myself. Halstead had a book to himself. But here I may as well add, that he gave up Latin after seven or eight days, becoming wholly disgusted with it. "Miserable frothy stuff!" he exclaimed one night, after endeavoring vainly to decline *dominus,* of the second declension; "I know it never will do a fellow one bit of good."

Joel had already explained to us that the Latin is a dead language, that is to say, an unspoken one.

"It ought to be dead," said Halstead. "And if it's dead, what's the use to study it? If I'm going to study at all, I'll study a *living* language; I'll study French."

"All right, Halse," replied Joel, laughing; and going to his trunk, he brought out *Fasquelle's French Course.* "Here's French for you. Take the first lesson for to-morrow."

This pleased Halstead; he thought he was thereby getting the start of the others, and he actually learned a number of lessons, after a manner; but in the end he had quite as much trouble with the living French as with the dead Latin. In fact, he found French pronunciation even *frothier* than the declension of

dominus, and had quite enough of both during the fortnight; so much so that those were his first and last attempts at language studies. Possibly he might have persevered a little better, but for Alfred Batchelder, who did not take Latin and ridiculed the others for doing so whenever he could obtain a hearing. When we were reciting our Latin, he and Halse would sit listening, and try very hard to make a little fun of it. One day they made so much disturbance, that Joel sent them both out of the room. As usual, Alfred was saucy and declared that as this was a private school, he should do as he pleased. To this Joel made no reply at the time. After school was dismissed that night, Alfred continued to talk about it. Still Joel did not reply.

At length, Alfred set off for home, but after going a few steps turned and threw a hard lump of snow at the master, who stood near the house door. Thereupon Joel gave chase and, overhauling him directly, laid him on his back in a snow-drift and scrubbed him with snow till he was very wet and red.

"There, sir!" exclaimed Joel, "I am not doing this as your teacher. This is out of school."

We were all glad of it; even Halstead laughed; but Alfred was so angry that he did not appear at the Old Squire's again. It was a good riddance; at best Alfred was an irredeemable little rowdy, wrong-headed in almost everything. He was far more ill-disposed than Halstead; and the latter was always more rude and unreliable when in his company.

Willis Murch and the Wilbur young folks attended the private school, but did not attempt Latin. They still had work in the *Common School Arithmetic* and in geography. But with our Latin class Joel tried what he called an experiment. "I want you to put out all your strength and all your time on Latin alone, during this fortnight," he said. "We will have only one exercise besides Latin, and that will not be a lesson,

exactly, but it will fit in well with this new study. Every evening we will read an hour and a half from ancient history, and then ask questions about it, all of which I will explain to you as well as I can." His idea was that even in that fortnight, if we devoted our minds wholly to it, he could give us so good a start in Latin that we would be able to translate it without much assistance.

We commenced the declensions of nouns and recited three lessons daily, beginning the translation of the easy sentences, on the second day. Addison, Theodora and Catherine made remarkable progress; they learned all five of the declensions of nouns the first day. The rest of us, who were not so quick, kept pace as best we could. It seemed to me that I had never studied so hard in my whole life. My head fairly sang with *musa, musae, musae, musam, musa, musa* and *gladius, gladii, gladio, gladium, gladie, gladio!*

I remember, too, that the first sounds I heard on waking next morning were from Addison who was tramping about our room, declining *oratio, orationis, orationi, orationem, oratio, oratione; orationes, orationum, orationibus, orationes, orationes, orationibus.*

"Doad!" he shouted loud enough to be heard through the wall of the room. "Can you decline *lex?*" Whereupon, from the other side of the partition wall, arose a confident voice, reciting, — *lex, legis, legi, legem, lex, lege,* etc. And she had no sooner finished than Ellen chimed in with *leo, leonis, leoni, leonem, leo, leone,* etc.

Then Joel, hearing the refrain up stairs, raised his droll, falsetto voice and brayed out, "*Hic, haec, hoc; hujus, hujus, hujus; huic, huic, huic; hunc, hanc, hoc;* etc. This was in pronouns, far ahead of us; and we were unable to respond in kind; but Ad shouted, "I'll be there before night!"

While dressing, the whole house resounded to Latin nouns of various declensions in half a dozen different

voices, Joel at times displaying his superior acquisitions by conjugating the verbs *moneo* and *rego,* to which we all listened in silent admiration!

At length, as we entered the dining-room, to breakfast, a fearful chorus of nouns and verbs arose, declined and conjugated in six different voices. Gram stopped her ears.

"Joel Pierson, this is worse than the tower of Babel!" she exclaimed. "I believe you are all crazy, or soon will be! And I'm sure *I* shall be," she added, "if you are going on like this long! Is this the way scholars always study Latin?"

"No, Mother," replied Joel. "Students beginning Latin are apt to be very blue and dumpish. Sometimes they scarcely speak all day long; and there is one case of suicide on record, but we have got it on the cheerful side, here."

"The noisy side, I should think!" cried Gram. "Do you expect to go on like this a fortnight?"

"Yes, Mother, day and night," cried Joel.

Thomas and Catherine reached the schoolroom at eight, the second morning. They came in declining *exercitus* and *dies,* of the fourth and fifth declensions. Catherine was ready to begin adjectives. So were Theodora and Addison. Immediately the room resounded to *bonus-a-um* and *felix, felicis, felici, felicem,* etc.

That day they three finished pronouns; and the rest of us in the class tagged after them, doing our best to keep up, but succeeding only indifferently. It was a veritable Latin steeple-chase, and no one wished to be the hindmost. I recollect that after reading in Ancient History that evening, we all resumed our study of pronouns and would, I really think, have sat up till midnight, but that Joel went around at ten and resolutely gathering up all the books, sent Thomas and Catherine home, and literally drove us off to bed. He began to be alarmed concerning the demon of

study which he had raised in us. We protested that we were not a bit tired; but he blew out the sitting-room lamp and shouted, "School's dismissed!"

Addison went up stairs grumbling, whereupon Joel called after us that he should himself rise at five and kindle a fire in the sitting-room fire-place; and that if any of us wished to rise then and study for an hour or two before breakfast, we could do so.

We were all soundly asleep at five next morning; but the noise made by Joel knocking about in the fire-place with tongs and shovel, waked Addison who turned out in a moment. His movements in turn waked me and I made haste to follow his example. I would gladly have gone to sleep again, but I durst not let the others get ahead of me for an hour. As we went down stairs in the dark, Addison tapped at Theodora's door and said, "Five o'clock."

"Is it?" said she, sleepily. "Seems to me I have but just gone to sleep." She and Ellen soon came down to the sitting-room, however; but Halstead did not appear.

After we were fairly awake it was very cosy and nice, studying there in the sitting-room before the brightly blazing fire. Joel was reading *Electra* in Greek and had his large lexicon laid open on the table, as also Hadley's Greek grammar. It seemed to me that it would be an age before I should be so far advanced as that. Joel told us that morning that it would require three years to "fit" for college.

"I think I can fit in two years," said Addison.

"You could in a year and a half if you were to go on as you are rushing ahead this week," replied Joel, laughing. "But you will not long hold out, like this."

We began to learn the first conjugation of Latin verbs before the sitting-room fire, that morning, taking *amo*, of course, as the paradigm; and I recollect that I learned the first four tenses of the indicative mood before breakfast. Addison and Theodora finished the

indicative mood, I believe, and began the subjunctive. Hitherto Addison had always been able to outstrip Theodora a little in studies; but in Latin she proved a match for him; he could not surpass her much, if any. When Thomas and Catherine came that morning, after breakfast, we found that they, too, had begun *amo,* and that Catherine was fully as far on in it as Theodora. Thomas had more difficulty; he and I groaned our troubles to each other in private.

"This will kill me," said Thomas.

"It's killing me," said I. "But I don't want to get left behind."

"I don't," said Thomas. "But aren't you sorry you began?"

"Almost," said I.

"If you are going to teach school here night and day, too, Joel, I guess we shall have to get a new barrel of kerosene," Gram observed at the breakfast table; kerosene was high-priced in those days.

"I don't know but that you will, Mother," replied Joel. "But what is kerosene, when such progress can be made as we are making!"

We entered the second conjugation that forenoon, taking *moneo,* and also learned all the vocabularies and exercises up to the third conjugation.

It was on this day that poor Halse dropped out altogether. Ned and his sisters, too, missed a number of days, although they did very well, Joel said repeatedly.

Next day we had *rego* to conjugate, also the irregular verb *sum,* with six exercises and the first four rules in construction; and the next day, a great and memorable day with the class, we were given the first of Æsop's Fables to translate, or rather the tenth one in our text book. It was the fable of *The Fox and the Lion. Vulpes quae nunquam leonem viderat,* etc.

How almost insurmountably difficult that fable looked to me, at first sight! Thought I to myself,

others may be able to read this, but I never shall! When I saw the hundreds of pages, too, which a student aspiring to enter college must translate and be prepared to pass examinations in, I said, "This is not for me." How many hundreds of young persons have thought the same, at first!

"Turn to your vocabulary," said Joel encouragingly. "Look up each word, and write them down, one after another, then remembering your declensions and conjugations try to put them together, and see what you can get out of it!" Theodora soon hit on the meaning and translated the fable nearly right; but it was a droll story which I got out of it! Thomas, too, grew disheartened and, after a long struggle, made a fictitious translation to the effect that the fox saw the lion poking about a hen-roost so frequently that he grew tired of the spectacle and said to him one morning, if you were not quite so big and yellow, I would address you in low Dutch!

Joel did not approve of this effort. "That sort of thing doesn't count, Thomas," said he. "Better stick to the text."

After much mental travail I got hold of the main points in the fable and then contrived to piece it together, after a fashion. It is always the first effort which costs hard toil. The fable of *The Hawk and the Doves* (*Accipiter et Columbae*), which was assigned us next day, came much easier. Joel was very particular that we should not assist each other, and obtained a promise from us each to that effect. "You will never make good, self-respecting Latin students, if you depend on others to make your translations for you!" he exclaimed, with emphasis, and iterated this sentiment nearly every day. "Make up your minds at the outset, too, that you will never use 'ponies.'"

"What's a 'pony?'" a number of us inquired.

Joel laughed. "It is somewhat to your credit that you don't know," said he. "You will find out quite

soon enough, if you go to a Latin school, or to college. But as there is neither safety nor merit in ignorance, I will inform you that a 'pony' is a translation, written or printed, which lazy, unprincipled students make use of secretly to get their lessons from, or rather to evade their lessons."

"Ho!" cried Thomas, "that must be jolly!"

"It is so very jolly that I never knew a student, making use of them, who amounted to anything," replied Joel. "It is cheating. It is also unfair to others in the class. But the worst effect of it is always on the one who uses it. It robs him at once of self-respect and self-reliance. I take it upon myself to say boldly that only a sneak will use a 'pony.' If I were reduced to the necessity of using one, I would tell every member of my class of it, in advance, and also my instructor; but there never need be any necessity of using one, where the student has studied honestly and well, to begin with."

On the following day we were given two fables: *The Lion and the Kid* and *The Wolf*. Now that we were fairly started and the first hardness and fear of translation were off, I think that I never enjoyed any study, or exercise, so well as looking out the translations of those Latin fables. We sat at tables near the windows and worked away at those involved sentences, glancing up from moment to moment, to see, by the expression on their faces, how the others were getting on. Addison's countenance usually wore a smile of triumph; Catherine would be looking keenly at the page, with now and then a nimble reference to the vocabulary; Theodora would be thoughtfully gazing far over the top of her book, and only when in dire perplexity would give a little restless nibble at her fingernails, — for she was trying hard to break off that childish habit. Thomas was, for the most of the time, twisting and turning and knocking his feet together, with now and then an audible groan. As for myself,

the most marked effect that I was aware of, was the manner my hands perspired when I was on difficult passages. I was obliged to keep wiping them, to prevent my fingers from wetting the pages of the book. I tried very hard to keep the matter private; but the others noticed it after a time and nicknamed me "the sweater." In spite of my best efforts, the pages of the reader containing those Fables became much soiled.

After an hour or two of study Ellen would usually go down cellar and fetch a large nappy full of apples: orange apples, blue-pearmains, sponge-russets, jilly-flowers, baldwins, Ribston pippins and other varieties, of which there grew not less than thirty in the Old Squire's orchard. As the old gentleman made it a rule to put into the cellar every fall not less than twenty-five barrels, there were apples for all who wanted them, at any time, and no questions asked. Formerly it had been the custom to make six barrels of cider every autumn; but after the Temperance reform began in Maine, cider-mills fell into disrepute, and the more conscientious farmers ceased altogether to sell or make apple cider. The Old Squire was accustomed to say, emphatically, that it was worse than useless to vote for prohibition and then make cider, either to sell, give away, or drink one's self. Nor would he sell his refuse apples to others to make cider from. "Boil 'em for the hogs, boys," he said. "If we are going to have a 'Maine Law,' let's keep it. We might as well make cider ourselves as sell the apples to a man who we know means to make them into cider."

The Old Squire never took any credit to himself for these opinions. It was simply his way. But if all who believe in the national prohibition of intoxicants would take that stand, the reform, in this respect, would be much facilitated. A good citizen will live his principles as well as vote them: such at least were the doctrines the old gentleman tried to instil into our minds, as boys. But of late different ideas are taught.

Supply and Demand have been deified, so to speak, and have taken the consciences of producers under their care. If Demand offers a good price for poison, to be used in making orphans in one or more parts of the country, we are told that Supply need not trouble himself about the orphans, but may produce the poison as fast as possible and get his money for it. That, they say, is "business." The writer makes no pretense of giving advice or instruction on this subject, but none the less ventures to advise all clear-minded boys to think this question out for themselves and not take any interested person's word for it.

CHAPTER XIV

WE ALL HAVE THE MUMPS

I THINK that it was the following day (for I recall that we had three fables assigned, *The Enemies, The Oxen* and *The Raven and the Fox*) when Addison, at dinner, suddenly complained that his left ear ached.

"So does mine," said Ellen. "My jaw on the left side feels queer, too. It is swelled."

Addison remarked that his own jaw also felt queer.

"Do you suppose it is the Latin, Ad?" Theodora asked, laughing.

"I shouldn't wonder," Gram observed. "I have been expecting that something would happen to all your jaws, from the strange talk I have heard in the sitting-room, this week. I would not like to put my jaws about in that way."

"I could not eat a sponge-russet this forenoon, either," continued Ellen. "It tasted so sour and sharp that it made my ear ache dreadfully."

With that Gram, who had been merely in sport, alluding to the Latin, suddenly looked up and said, "Come around here. Let me see your ear, Ellen."

Ellen passed around the table to Gram's chair and was examined attentively for some moments. "Taste a little of that," said the old lady, pouring out a small quantity of vinegar from the cruse. Ellen did so gingerly and laughed at first, but a moment later made a wry face and uttered a cry of extreme discomfort.

"I thought so!" Gram cried confidently. "You've got *the mumps,* young lady!"

"Then I'll bet a cent I've got them!" exclaimed Addison in dismay.

"Well, taste of the vinegar," said Gram, pouring out a little more and passing the spoon to him.

Addison sipped away with a wondrous wise look, slowly tasting it; and then he, too, made a wry face and clapped both hands beneath his ears. "O gracious! how it cuts! how it stings!" he ejaculated, getting very red in the face. "What ails my jaws!"

"You've both got the mumps!" cried Gram. "Your jaws will have to keep stiller for a while, or I'm much mistaken!"

"I heard that they had the mumps out at the Corners last week," Joel remarked, "when I went to the post-office."

Addison and Ellen continued studying that afternoon, although they felt far from well; their faces were swollen on both sides.

Next morning they were both quite ill.

Thomas came in alone that morning; Catherine also had an aching ear, he told us; and before noon Halstead began to complain.

"You will all have the mumps, most likely," Joel remarked to us that night. "I conclude it will be better to close the school and save the remainder of your money for the time being. You may wish, perhaps, to have another short term, later on."

We disliked very much to stop, till the fifteen days had expired, but finally decided to do so. Joel bade us farewell, and went back to College the following morning and left us to settle our accounts with the mumps.

The question where we had "caught" the mumps, was one which puzzled Gram exceedingly. No one had been to the house during the previous week save the pupils and neighbors, none of whom, except Catherine, had mumps; in fact, the question how they came to us was obscure. It seemed to be a case of spontaneous

mumps. In jest Gram always attributed them to the Latin which had disturbed the normal and proper movements of our jaws. Addison humorously favored this opinion and argued that Latin would come much easier to us all, as soon as we were well over the mumps.

Before night, however, both he and Ellen ceased to find anything humorous in their affection. They were really quite ill. Their cheeks protruded like those of a chipmunk, stuffed with corn. The lower lobes of their ears turned outward in a very comical manner. Both refused food, the effort to masticate caused them such anguish. Gram bound up their cheeks in cotton batting and fed them on chicken broth.

Halstead was not much ill; his jaw gave him less trouble; he now derided Addison, and coming into the sitting-room where the latter lay on the lounge, much flushed and very miserable, set about making a picture of him on the smooth cover of a salt box — the only time we ever knew him to attempt anything in the artistic line. He really made a very comical picture, which bore so grotesque a resemblance that we who had not mumps as yet, were convulsed with laughter. Halstead continued at his task, walking first to one point of view, then another, about the lounge, till he nearly drove Addison wild. Theodora sought to coax him away, but he would not budge.

"This is the chance I've always wanted," he declared, "to get a good likeness of Ad and his big head. I mean always to keep it. I want to make it a work of art." Then he resumed his walks about the lounge again.

"If you don't quit, I will get up and throw you out!" cried Addison, at length.

"Guess I wouldn't try it. I rather think I can best you to-night," said Halse. "If I should get in a blow right under that left ear of yours, you would squeal. Doesn't that ear stick out, though! I never saw two

such chops on any living creature, except a fat pig. Addison, you ought to get your photograph taken tonight and send it over to Edith Thomas. You'd like to have Edith see it, you know."

Addison began to get up, his swollen, flushed visage turning even redder from pent-up indignation and wrath; but at this juncture Gram entered and turned Halstead out.

Addison sank back on the lounge with a groan, quite dizzy, his ears singing, as he confessed, like a hot tea-kettle. "But, by ginger, I will thrash that fellow, if I ever get well," he exclaimed thickly.

Halstead meantime had gone out to interview Ellen who was in an old rocking-chair, wrapped up in a comforter, by the kitchen stove; and soon we heard a plaintive outcry from that quarter: "Dear me! Do go off and let me alone. You've no more feeling than a horse! Gram! Gram! Sha'n't Halse quit plaguing me?" The old lady set off for the kitchen in haste; and a moment later Halstead's feet were heard clattering out toward the wood-house.

Mumps, or parotitis, is a capricious malady, due to an infection which finds lodgment in the parotid, and more rarely, in the sub-maxillary glands; — and here I may record that one of the Murch boys had an inflammation of the sub-maxillary gland a fortnight later, instead of the more usual parotitis. Why the left parotid gland is so much more commonly attacked than the right, at first, is one of the mysteries of the ailment.

Addison was not as ill the next morning and improved rapidly, although his cheeks continued swollen for three or four days. Ellen was miserably ill for two days longer; yet her face was not as badly swollen as Addison's. Halstead scarcely minded his attack at all. His face was swollen but little and he boasted that he was able to sip vinegar every day.

Meantime Catherine was quite ill, but none of the

others of our school group were attacked till seven or eight days later.

The Old Squire, with the two hired Doanes, had now begun to work up the great wood-piles in front of the farmhouse ell. He summoned Halstead and me to his assistance. We had first to cut the eight-foot logs in two and split them, then put them on a saw-horse and saw them, once for the sitting-room fire-place, twice for the kitchen stove and other stoves in the chambers. The stove-wood had to be split again, so that altogether we had a laborious task before us.

The old gentleman always made a point of getting his entire stock of fuel for the year prepared and packed away in the wood-house before beginning field work in the spring. It was new business for me; and that wood-pile looked so huge that I imagined that we would hardly finish it in time for much else that season. The great tiers grew small very slowly, during those first three or four days. When Addison was able to join us, the task progressed a little better, and in the course of a week the most of the great logs had gone over into a heap of fresh white stove-wood which was rapidly tanned yellow under the March wind.

Not alone the wood was tanned; our faces got brown with equal rapidity. Theodora assured us that she could see the brown tint on our cheeks deepen every hour when the wind blew. A little vacation was at hand for me, however; in the course of about nine days, parotitis claimed me, too; Theodora and I had been testing our mouths with vinegar for several days; she failed to stand the test on the following day; and Wealthy was seized the day after. All three of us had the mumps very lightly, however; although I am sorry to confess that I made as much of mine as I could, in order to escape the wood-pile which I had grown heartily tired of. It was far more agreeable to sit in the house with the girls and play the invalid. Gram had seen too much parotitis in her day to be much deceived

by my languid airs, however, and soon pronounced me able to work again. Ellen and Addison had sympathy for me; but Halstead declared me a shirk. As I sat at the window, indoors, he would look up from sawing wood, at intervals, and make the most abominable faces to me and, with expressive gestures and much dumb show, intimate that my proper place was out there with the buck-saw. I managed to enjoy a vacation of three days, however. In fact, I then regarded the mumps as a rather agreeable respite from toil; but with mumps much depends on the severity of the attack.

CHAPTER XV

MAKING MAPLE SUGAR

ALREADY the great snow drifts in front of the farmhouse, in the roads, and beside the stone walls had begun to melt away. At mid-day the snow was soft and slumpy and the bees were out; but in the morning there would be a hard crust on which we could run about and visit the neighbors.

On one of these mornings, about March 10th, Addison looked across the breakfast table to the Old Squire and asked if it were not getting about time to "tap trees." "Pretty near time," was the reply. "I see that sap has started."

"Well, Joseph, if you are going to make sugar, you must get two of those new sap-pans and try to do the sugaring off over in the lot; for I do not see how I can have it in the house this spring," Gram declared.

The Old Squire replied that he was not at all desirous of making sugar that spring, and there the subject was dropped — to the dismay of us young folks; for much had been anticipated by us all in regard to maple syrup. I had never seen the process, but had heard glowing accounts of it from Ellen and Halstead. Gram and the Old Squire, who had been making maple sugar annually for forty years, had naturally grown a little tired of the routine.

Addison and Ellen took counsel together; and at length the latter came privately to call Theodora and me out to the wood-shed. Halstead also was present.

"What we're talking about is making the old folks

an offer on maple-syrup this spring," Addison explained. "It's too bad not to make any, when we have sap-house, buckets and kettles over in the 'Aunt Hannah Lot,' all ready for it."

"That's so," Ellen and Halstead both said. "It's luscious good," the former added. "I wish I had some this minute."

"Well," said Addison, "I have been thinking, since we all want to make some, that we might make it and make a little money out of it, too; that is, if you are all in favor of it and are willing to work; for of course there is work about it."

"But how, Ad?" asked Theodora, looking a little curious.

"Why, I was going to say to the Old Squire, that we would go ahead, if he would buy us one new sap-pan, and make all the syrup and sugar we could, on shares with him, half and half, and not trouble Gram anything about it. If we made four hundred-weight, half of it would come into the house; but our half we would sell at the village. It fetches twelve cents a pound, you know; we might get that money, clear, and please the folks, too. I rather think they would like the idea."

We all thought exceedingly well of this proposition; young people — even lazy ones — are generally willing to exert themselves somewhat to obtain maple syrup. Besides, we believed that it would be great sport to make syrup on our own account, in the lot; for Thomas and Kate would be sure to call over often; and we could boil sap, evenings, make maple flap-jacks on snow, and have a good time generally.

Addison was therefore commissioned to broach the subject to the Old Squire. He entered on it at the supper-table, that evening, while the rest of us sat listening, with expectancy.

"Seems 'most too bad not to make any sugar this spring, sir," he began, after we were all helped to milk

toast. "But, of course, it is a good deal of work; and I've been thinking, sir, of making you an offer, if Gram also thinks well of it."

"What's your offer?" said the old gentleman.

"Well, sir, we boys and the girls have been talking it over and we are willing, if you will get us a sap-pan, for syruping off, to go ahead over at the lot and make what we can on shares, half and half, and relieve you and Gram of all bother about it."

"I guess there would be some queer sugar made," Gram remarked ironically.

"Well," said Ad, perceiving that he had gone a step too fast, "I was about to say that perhaps Gram would not mind riding over to the lot in the sleigh and giving us the benefit of her advice once or twice, to help us along."

"Well, but who will board you during the two or three weeks that you are making sugar, on shares?" demanded the old gentleman, his eye twinkling a little. "Were you expecting to turn in your half of the syrup toward your board?"

"No, sir," said Addison, laughing, but coloring a little. "We were proposing to sell our half toward a school fund for next fall."

The Old Squire laughed. "I'm afraid, Ruth," said he, "that I shall get my fingers pinched in this business, if I don't look out for myself. These grandchildren of ours are sharp youngsters, I see."

"But I should call it a good offer," Gram said.

"You know you have us to board, anyway, grandfather," said Theodora, quietly. "The more's the pity, but it is so," she added. "I suppose we count on that more than we ought to, perhaps."

"O, I guess we shall be able to get enough to eat and drink!" cried the Old Squire, disclaiming the sentiment which Theodora sought to express. "I was only in fun about your board, my girl.

"But this syrup-making is hard work, boys," he

continued. "I don't mind your trying your hand at it on shares; but it will be hard work for you."

"If you say the word, we will tackle it," said Halstead; but the Old Squire did not "say the word" at once. He took the evening to consider the matter.

Addison did not ask him further concerning it, but while he and the old gentleman were at the stable together, next morning, they came to an understanding.

"We are going to take the job on shares," Addison said to me as we went in to breakfast. "It's all settled."

Accordingly, after breakfast we all set off for the maple grove, in the Aunt Hannah Lot pasture. There were here, scattered about the rough land adjoining the Edwards farm, nearly three hundred maples fit for tapping; a few of them were white maples, but the most rock maples, or sugar maples. Some of them were very large with huge spreading tops; and toward the southerly side, near two great rocks close by which grew five large maples and a yellow birch, stood the weathered sap-house, a small hovel, ten by twenty feet, with a chimney in one corner, an "arch" of brick, in which were set three large iron kettles, and a little dark loft overhead where the cedar sap-buckets, spiles, sap-yokes, etc., were stored.

Here the Old Squire had made maple sugar every spring for more than a generation; and he accompanied us that morning to give us hints from his long experience. We took a hand-sled with tapping augers, hammers, shovels, etc., and were in high spirits, with a bright March sun soaring above the white clouds overhead and the hard snow crust underfoot. Already the twigs of the maples had begun to turn red; and the day before, two crows had returned and were lurking about the farm with an eye to defunct lambs. A blue jay, too, was heard crying sharply as we went through the little belt of woods between the farm and the Aunt Hannah Lot.

"It will soon be spring again," the Old Squire said. "We ought to be thankful there is no war and that we have peace once more, even although times are a little hard for farmers. Seems as if everything a farmer has is shrinking in value. But store prices are lower; that is one advantage."

This was the period succeeding the war, when so many Eastern farmers became disheartened and were led, many of them, into erroneous opinions as to national finance, which found expression, later, in the "Greenback craze." A farm which had been worth three thousand dollars at the close of the Civil War, could now scarcely have been sold for seventeen hundred. It was very difficult to raise money for any purpose. The average citizen could not understand why, since peace was restored, he found it so much harder to get a living than in "war times."

During the war the government was paying out vast sums in "bounties," wages and for munitions; and hence money was plenty; although in reality the nation — and that meant everybody in the country — was getting enormously in debt.

When the war closed, these great sums ceased to be paid out, and the unpleasant task of paying the great debt began.

All wise citizens comprehended it, and bore it as best they could, knowing that it was necessary and unavoidable. But there were still thousands who could not comprehend it, and what was worse, other thousands who did not wish to comprehend it, but desired to have the government issue millions of dollars more in greenbacks, or in other words to go on running in debt, instead of paying what it already owed as it had promised to do.

I recollect that Addison and the Old Squire were discussing the matter for weeks, and were in not a little doubt, at times, what was right and best; for the subject was not as easily understood then as now.

That morning I saw a sugar maple "tapped" for the first time, and saw the sweet sap drop into buckets, set in the snow beneath the spiles. But first we had kindled a fire in the sap-house, melted snow and scalded out the buckets which Halstead handed down from the loft, a hundred and seventy-eight of them. After the water was hot Theodora and Ellen attended to this part of the labor. The buckets had been carefully put away the previous spring and were in good condition.

In one of them which had been set right side up, we found a nest of dry leaves and a squirrel's hoard of acorns; — for there were a few red oaks in the pasture. We concluded that it was the preserve of a squirrel that had either forgotten where he had placed his store, or else, as is more likely, one that had lost his life early the previous winter and therefore left his hoard as a legacy to the finder.

Addison, meantime, was tapping trees and Wealthy supplying him with spiles, and carrying the hammer about for him to drive the spiles into the holes in the trees. It fell to my own lot to carry the buckets to the trees; and the Old Squire instructed me very carefully how to set them in the snow and prop the southerly side with stones or sticks.

Like most boys I soon began to think that my part of the work was the hardest and intimated that I would rather tap than distribute buckets; — for it looked to me very easy to bore holes in the trees.

"Well, let him tap one, if he wants to," the Old Squire said quietly.

With a grin Addison handed me the tapping auger; and planting myself in front of a maple I essayed to bore a hole in it. "Mind now," said Addison, "the hole must slant upward a little, so that the spile may slant down. If it doesn't, the sap will not run into the bucket."

I stabbed the worm of the auger into the hard, rough

bark and tried to bore into the tree — on an upward slant. It did not *auger* well. I tried again, but could not make the worm draw. Again and again I attempted it, for I knew that Addison and the Old Squire were looking on and I presumed that they were amused, although I would not look at them.

As a result of my efforts I produced a scar in the green tree, very shallow and resembling an ulcer more than an auger hole. The sap began to trickle forth, but no spile could by any means be inserted. I was discomfited, mortified, and uncertain what to do next.

"Bores hard, does it, my son?" said the Old Squire. His visage was much puckered by smiles. Addison, too, was regarding the effort with an aggravating grin. Wealthy, the little traitress, had run off to tell the others that I was trying to tap a tree and couldn't; and Halstead, Theodora and Ellen were approaching with faces expectant of diversion.

"Going to give it up?" Addison asked me.

I would not do that and again jabbed the auger into the hole. At length I got it started to bore a little, but Addison cried, "Slant it up! Slant it up more!"

In trying to slant the hole upward, I again lost the bite of the worm and puggled away fruitlessly, while Halstead and the girls laughed.

Again and yet again I tried, but had now got the hole in such a condition that no one could have bored there. With much shame, I finally made a virtue of necessity and said, "I don't believe I can tap a tree."

"Have you just found that out?" cried Halstead. "We've all known it for the last fifteen minutes."

I made an effort to get rid of the auger by handing it back to Addison, but the Old Squire cried, "No, no, sir. Never give up in that way. You must now tap a tree."

"I don't believe I can," I faltered.

"Yes, you can!" cried the old gentleman. "Take that auger and come out here to this log."

I followed him to a birch log which lay near the sap-house. "Now bore a hole in it," said he.

This I succeeded in doing.

"Now come to this maple," the Old Squire exhorted me, "and try again. Get right down on your knees, set your auger at the right slant, to begin with, and try to tap that tree."

I had completely lost confidence in myself, but obeyed and, somewhat to my own surprise, succeeded this time in boring a fairly even hole in the tree, at the proper angle.

"There you are!" cried the old gentleman, patting me on the shoulder. "Now go back to that first tree, begin a new hole and tap it right."

My courage was better now, and I tapped the big maple and drove in the spile.

"Never show the white feather again, in anything you try to do!" cried the Old Squire, by way of final advice to me. "What others can do, you can do."

It was a good lesson; I had learned, moreover, that tapping a frozen green rock maple, with an inch auger, is something more than child's play, and was quite willing to let Addison resume his task. The scar which I had made on the big maple oozed and wasted sap all that spring. Halstead often called my attention to it when we were gathering sap, and he wished to hector me a little. "See that poor tree bleed!" he would say.

At length the Old Squire relieved Addison at his task of tapping, for the latter grew not a little tired by the time he had bored eighty or ninety holes. We did not feel quite right to have the old gentleman do the work, however, since we had undertaken the job ourselves; and Theodora at last said that we would need to give him more than half of the first boiling of syrup. "O no, O no," he replied. "I am not trying to hedge on the contract. I do this of my own accord. But if you fear an infringement, you must forbid my working," he added, laughing heartily. "The fact is,

I've tapped these trees here so many years that it comes very handy for me. Seems just as if I must take hold and work," he added.

We fancied that he felt a little touch of sadness at the thought of giving up his annual task here despite the laugh with which he turned it off. Theodora presently drew Addison aside, and they conversed for some moments; then as I was setting a bucket under a spile that the Old Squire had just driven, Addison came along and said, "We have been thinking, sir, that we would like to have you go in company with us and make a new contract."

Gramp glanced at him and divined his motive instantly; for he was always very quick to appreciate a touch of sentiment. But he only laughed. "No, no," he said, "we will stick to our agreement. You couldn't make a young man of me again, if you were all to try ever so kindly," he added. "I have had my time. Others must soon take my place. It is the law of nature. The main thing is for each one to do his part well, during his allotted time." With that he abruptly dismissed the subject and began to speak of the fire-wood for boiling the sap. There were about two cords of weathered dry wood which had been cut and piled at a little distance from the sap-house the previous spring. In addition to this the Old Squire now pointed out to us several dead and partly dry trees, scattered about the lot; for a few maples died nearly every year here. Tapping and drawing the sap from the trees materially shortens their lives. The wood of their trunks, too, near the ground, where the tapping is done, is very liable to decay around the auger holes.

It seemed to me that I never tasted a more delightful draught than that cold maple sap, fresh from those great trees that morning. It ran quite rapidly, that is to say, it dropped fast; by eleven o'clock some of the buckets were half full. There were two large tubs, called sap-holders, of about a hogshead's capacity each,

in the sap-house. Both these were scalded out with hot water and prepared for storing the sap overnight.

By this time we went to dinner, but returned before three to collect the day's run of sap. The snow crust had thawed by this time beneath the warm sun; and it became a laborious task to tread a path into the lot and afterwards tread diverging paths from the sap-house around to the trees. Carrying the sap in tin pails through the snow, when sometimes we would slump into it with both feet, was far from easy labor; this part, indeed, is the prosy side of maple sugar making.

Many of the buckets were now brimming full. Halstead, Addison and I were occupied for as much as two hours, fetching in the sap and filling the sap-holders. Addison made use of a sap-yoke and brought two pailfuls at once; but one pail was as much as I could manage in the soft snow; and once or twice I spilled my sap.

Before it was all gathered I had become very tired and fully realized that even so alluring a business as syrup-making has, necessarily, its share of work ere the sweets can be enjoyed.

The weather was still so cool that there was no risk from the sap souring in the holders; and the business of boiling it down was postponed till the following forenoon. In fact, we were all fatigued; even the girls, who had not assisted at gathering the sap, were now quite content to wait till next day.

Just as we were finishing work and fastening the door of the sap-house to go home, Thomas Edwards came across lots on snowshoes, to see how we were getting on. Their sugar-lot lay to the westward of their farm and pasture; and he informed us that he and his father were to begin tapping trees the following morning.

"How's Latin lately?" he shouted back to us as he climbed the fence, bordering their field. "We haven't looked at it since we had the mumps," replied Addison.

"No more have I," replied Thomas. "I believe the mumps wiped it all out of my head. But Kate is hammering away at it, every day."

We had another reminder of our neglected Latin that night. Ellen, who had hastened to the post-office after the mail, brought a letter from Master Pierson, also a package on which there were sixteen cents in postage stamps, which proved to be a second-hand copy of *Cæsar's Commentaries on the Gallic War,* with notes, map, a vocabulary and a short biography of Julius Cæsar. There were also pictures of the battles between the Roman army and the Helvetii, Germans, Nervii and numerous ancient peoples of Gaul. It was a copy of what was called "the Brooks edition," that being the name of the editor.

Oddly enough the first words in Joel's letter were the same with which Thomas had hailed us, half an hour previously: "How's Latin, lately?"

Joel then went on to encourage Addison (for the letter was directed to him) and all the rest of the class, to retain what we had already learned, by reviewing it occasionally. "Perhaps," he added, "you can read a few sections of Cæsar. It opens rather hard, but you will soon catch the knack of translating it. Suppose you try eight or ten sections, during the spring. It is interesting reading after you make a start with it."

We examined the book with much interest. It looked ominously difficult to me; but I liked the pictures and the portrait of Cæsar very much.

"We will take it out to the sap-house while we are tending kettles and see what we can make of it," Addison said. "Perhaps Kate and Tom will come over and try their wisdom teeth on it."

Ellen had another piece of news. "There is a notice posted on the schoolhouse, for a school-meeting, to choose a new agent for next year," she informed us. "I stopped and read it, as I came past."

This notice was of interest to us; for there had been

much difference of opinion in the district for two years; and we knew that Tibbetts and his clique were resolved if possible to elect an agent who would do as they wished about the school. As we considered their intentions bad, we were all — Addison in particular — much exercised about it and desired, if possible, to defeat them. We hoped to have Joel Pierson hired for the following winter as our teacher again. "If Tibbetts gets his man elected for agent, we shall not have Joel," said Addison, at the supper table. "We can count that as settled. There will be an end of Latin, algebra and everything else that we want in the school line here at home. We have advanced now where a poor teacher will be of no use to us, only a drawback. A good teacher, too, is best for every scholar in the district, whether advanced or backward. I think it is a shame to be held back and be put at a disadvantage by one old rum-seller! What he will do, if he can, really excludes us from the advantages of the school here and defrauds us of our school money; we shall be obliged to go somewheres else, if we have instruction. Fancy having another Sam Lurvey next winter!"

Addison waxed indignant; he felt very strongly on this subject.

"But perhaps Tibbetts will not get his man elected for agent," Theodora said.

"I am anything but easy about that," exclaimed Addison. "There's a majority of voters out around the Corners. The trouble is there are seven or eight weak-headed, no-account fellows, some of them only just come of age to vote, who have no sense and no care for anything except Tibbetts' bad liquor. Half of them, I suppose, are in debt to him for it; and they will do just as he gives them the wink to do. There's Tim Darnley, Jerry Cross, Lige Davis, and that whole gang of low-lived chaps, who spend most of their time around Tibbetts' place, chewing tobacco, telling shady

stories and working just enough to live along and get a drink of rum now and then."

"It's a shame such men have the right to vote!" cried Gram whom Addison's oratory on the subject of temperance, and of Tibbetts in particular, always roused. "They ought no more to vote than so many pigs!"

"Well, but they have the right to do so, under the Constitution, Gram," replied Addison; "and it's their votes that I am afraid of."

"If I had made the Constitution, or if I had power at the State Legislature, no man should vote who was not of temperate habits and who did not have a family and a home in the community," Gram declared, vehemently.

"But, Ruth, that is not the Jeffersonian doctrine of equal rights for all men," remarked the Old Squire, smiling.

"Jefferson or no Jefferson, I don't believe in letting drunkards vote," exclaimed Gram. "Such votes hold the whole country back and degrade us. Nobody ought to be called a citizen, or be able to vote, who has not got a home of his own and something to vote for. It is just as Addison says, only worse; for it is drunken, worthless voters who defeat worthy measures in our elections, all over the country. And you mark what I say, for I have been hearing how elections go for the last twenty years, it will grow worse and worse in this respect, as time goes on, on account of liquor and boughten votes. It will not be the honest and intelligent citizens who will rule the country, but a mob of the Tibbetts and the Tim Darnley stamp. So I say and shall always say that only those ought to have a right to vote who are temperate and engaged in some useful occupation, and who have something of their own in the world to feel an interest in and to vote for."

"Just what I think, Gram!" cried Addison, laughing.

" We shall have to send you to Augusta, Ruth," observed the Old Squire a little sarcastically, for he never liked to hear grandmother talk politics too long at one time.

" Well, Joseph," cried the old lady, turning her attention to this last remark, " I have no doubt it would be quite as well to send home one half the representatives to the Legislature at Augusta, and put their wives in their places. There would be a better winter's work done at law-making than there was last winter, I'll be bound to say — which wouldn't be saying much, either. One thing we women would do, for certain, we would cork up the rum business so tight that no cork-screw ever yet made could get the stopper out."

The Old Squire did not reply to this sally, but remarked, at length, to Addison, that it would be well to make a quiet effort before the school-meeting took place, to set the matter before the minds of the voters in its true light and appeal to their good sense. " That is all we can properly do," he added. " All we ought to do."

" We are sure of every voter here in our own neighborhood, on this road," Addison remarked. " For I think Batchelder will vote with us; and Sylvester, Murch, Wilbur and Edwards will be with us, of course; but unless we can secure five or six of those Corners voters, we shall be defeated, sure as fate."

We went out from supper to see the new sap-pan which a neighbor had brought up from the village for us that afternoon. The Old Squire scalded it out and next morning we hauled it over to the sap-house where it was set on the " arch," in place of the two old kettles.

CHAPTER XVI

CAESAR AND MAPLE SYRUP

AT eight o'clock fires were kindled and the business of evaporating the sap began.

What clouds of steam it made in and around the sap-house, on that sharp cold morning! Addison constituted himself fireman and pan-tender. The science of evaporating rapidly lies in judiciously supplying the pan or pans with sap, boiling hot from the "heater," as we termed the kettle in which the cold sap was first raised to the boiling point. Halstead was set to fell and cut up a decayed maple, while I split and prepared dry wood from the pile, getting it ready for the fire. We worked till toward eleven when Theodora and Ellen came, bringing a small kettle in which there was a loaf of bread and a ball of fresh butter, churned that morning, also several small bowls. By this time the sap in the evaporator was very yellow and quite ropy. Theodora dipped out two quarts into the little kettle and, with Addison's assistance, set it over the "cuddy hole" of the arch, next the chimney. In the course of fifteen minutes more they pronounced it down to syrup and taking it off set the kettle to cool in the snow outside. Halstead had marked the approach of the girls and, feeling sure what was to follow, left his task and came to the sap-house, with a smilingly expectant countenance. "Just in time," Theodora called out to him. "Now all find seats for yourselves."

When we had gathered around she gave us each a bowl half full of syrup, sliced the loaf of bread and having set the ball of butter, with a knife conveniently by, cried, "Now let's sample the syrup."

It was the first time I had ever tasted maple molasses fresh from the kettle; and it seemed to me that I had never found anything equal to it, — so smooth to the tongue, so delicious to the palate.

"Don't this taste good," mumbled Halstead incoherently. "Wish my throat was two hundred feet long. I would like to sit here and feel every spoonful creep like a snail along the whole length of it."

"O, you glutton!" exclaimed Ellen. "But it *is* good, no mistake."

We found it so delightful that we voted to put on a second small kettleful for syruping, and before we had finished our lunch I imagine that we disposed of fully a pint of syrup apiece. Our labor during the morning, the cold air and the rough sylvan surroundings all combined to give us good appetites; and I do not recollect that we experienced any inconvenience from so unusual a ration of sweets.

Afterwards Theodora syruped a third kettleful to take home to Gram and the Old Squire. Ellen kindly assisted me at gathering sap for an hour; but as this is too hard work for girls, we then set her to tend the fire, while Addison took her place.

Halstead resumed his labors, wood-cutting, and toward night hauled nearly half a cord of it to the sap-house door, on the hand-sled. Indeed, there was plenty of work to do; for since nine o'clock in the forenoon, the sap had flowed copiously all day; and we had need to go on evaporating it for two hours or more after supper that evening.

It was a calm spring night, quite mild, although the soft snow began freezing, as soon as the sun set. Through the branches of the great maples, beyond the sap-house, a warm red glow lingered long on the west-

ern horizon; and the little saw-whet owls were calling out softly in the wooded lowland.

Addison had brought a small kerosene lamp from the house, and as the evening darkened, he lighted it and set it on one of the sap-holders, inside the open door. It gave but a feeble light, yet sufficed for young eyes; and immediately the kettles and pan were boiling well, Addison cried, "Now for Cæsar," and produced the copy which Joel had sent us.

"I'm afraid I couldn't translate a line of it," said Theodora.

"I know I cannot," said Ellen.

"Well, here goes," said Addison, opening to the first section of the first book. *"Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres; quarum unam incolunt Belgæ,"* he pronounced slowly and ponderously.

"But stop, Ad, let's read the English Introduction and the brief biography of Julius Cæsar first, so as to get some understanding of what it is all about," said Theodora. "That will perhaps make it a little easier."

"All right; but I have read that already," said Addison. "You read it, though; read it aloud so the rest can hear. I would like to hear it again, too."

Sitting on a bucket, with her back to the sap-holder on which the dim light was placed, Theodora read the Introductory Sketch, the rest of us listening with the deepest interest, trying to comprehend and remember it all. She was progressing slowly with it, re-reading some paragraphs, pausing to talk and comment on it at intervals, when we heard voices outside and saw a lantern, flitting among the maples at a little distance.

"That's Thomas and Kate," cried Ellen. "Only hear Kate fretting because the snow slumps so vexatiously, and Thomas laughing at her."

They came to the door and saluted us merrily.

"We're not boiling sap this evening," Tom explained, "so we thought we would call on you awhile. Kate wanted to see the new Latin book."

"Well, here it is!" said Theodora. "I'm reading the Introduction in English. That is hard enough for me."

"Do begin it again," cried Thomas. "I want to hear it."

"What assurance, Tom!" said Catherine. "Perhaps she doesn't want to read it again."

"She must," exclaimed Thomas. "We've got to hear it."

"Certainly," assented Theodora, good-humoredly; and she began again.

An hour or two was spent upon this, for we had many points to discuss in it; but at length we gathered in a group, some looking over the shoulders of the others, to glance at those first lines of Latin, and see what we could make of them.

"Well, *omnis* means *all,*" said Theodora. "I know so much."

"And *Gallia* is *Gaul,* of course, which is now France," said Catherine.

"*Divisa* is the participle from *divido* which means divide," remarked Addison; "and *est,* as we all know, means *is.* So there you have it: *All Gaul is divided* —"

"I saw whole pages of notes," I exclaimed. "About half the book is notes; and they tell a great deal about the Latin part. Let's look at the notes."

"But is that right?" questioned Theodora.

"Of course," said Thomas. "Else what are they there for?"

We had immediate recourse to the notes and found that about half the Latin was translated there, or at least explained so as to be easily translated. With this important aid, we soon learned that All Gaul is divided into three parts one of which the Belgæ inhabit, another the Aquitanians, and the third — here we stuck fast. How to translate *qui ipsorum lingua Celtæ* we were all at a loss. It was a complete puzzle; and as

it was already nearing nine o'clock, we were obliged to give it up for that night.

If I remember aright it was not till the second night after, that Addison solved the tangle of words in the third and fourth lines, and succeeded in making the meaning plain to the others. It is but fair to say, however, that we found nothing much harder than that, afterwards.

We had become so much absorbed and agitated over those two lines, that we quite forgot the sap and allowed the fire to go down so low that when at length Thomas called attention to the fact, the pan had entirely ceased boiling. We therefore shut up the sap-house, said good night to our visitors, and all set off for home. When we had gone some little distance along the path and Thomas and Catherine had nearly reached the line wall between their field and our maple grove, we suddenly heard the former shouting vigorously: "Hullo! Hullo, over there!" "Hullo! What's the matter?" Addison shouted back.

"Something has happened!" shouted Thomas, although we could hear Catherine, in lower tones, trying to hush him.

"Well, what is it?" we all shouted, a good deal interested.

"All Gaul is divided into three parts!" replied Thomas in a voice that might have been heard a mile. "One of which the Belgæ inhabit!"

This amused Theodora exceedingly. Addison shouted back, "You go home and find out which part the Celts inhabit!"

CHAPTER XVII

A SCHOOL-MEETING

OUR labors syrup-making that week and our evening efforts at translating Cæsar were tinged with a certain anxiety relative to the result of the school-meeting. A great deal appeared to us to depend on it. Addison, in particular, was much exercised and made several trips to the Corners, to ascertain the state of feeling in that quarter and also, as we surmised, to do a little electioneering on his own account. Thomas accompanied him one evening; and we learned afterwards that there had been hard words in Tibbetts' store which was also the post office; for by virtue of a petition which he had, himself, circulated two years previously Tibbetts had been appointed postmaster.

It was learned, too, that Tibbetts had been among the voters in that quarter of the district, with a paper, and partly by persuasion, partly by threats, had secured the names of a considerable number who thereby pledged themselves to vote as he indicated.

This bit of news so angered Addison, that he, in turn, began hatching plots.

We had with us then, for most of the time, two hired men, named Doane, Asa and James. Asa, in fact, might be said to live at the Old Squire's; and an agreement between him and us had already been entered into, to work at the farm for the ensuing season. At table that night Addison suddenly said, "Ase, you are a voter in this school district, did you know it?"

Asa laughed.

"Well, you are, if you choose to be," Addison insisted. "You are twenty-three years old and you call this your home."

The Old Squire looked up and seemed a little puzzled, but did not say anything, at first; at length he asked, "Do you pay a poll tax in this town, Asa?"

"Last year I did," replied Asa, in an injured tone. "They 'sessed me three dollars, and the Collector come and dunned me for it."

"That settles it!" cried Addison in triumph. "You can vote at our school-meeting, if you say this is your home."

"Then, Asa, you say so and vote on our side," cried Ellen. "You must, Asa, and help us beat Tibbetts and his clique."

"All right," replied Asa, laughing.

The Old Squire did not comment on this; but I thought that he did not seem wholly convinced.

Addison, however, cried out that here was one vote gained; and that evening he and Asa went out to the Corners together. The school-meeting was to come off three days later and during this time Halstead and I, with the girls, were obliged to do most of the syrup-making. Addison could scarcely work at all, he was so completely carried away by his interest in the coming election of school agent and his schemes for defeating Tibbetts. He would break off in the midst of the forenoon and start away across lots for the Corners, or to go up to Batchelder's, or to Murch's, and not return till noon; and at table he appeared to be in a brown study for most of the time.

Such undue interest in elections, either local or national, has sometimes a demoralizing tendency. In this instance we learned afterwards that Addison had gone to lengths which no one could soberly approve, and of which he was himself afterwards ashamed. But he was one of that sort of boys who, if they once set out to win a point, will labor day and night and leave

no stone unturned, to accomplish it. This is a valuable trait in a good cause; but when it comes to securing votes for carrying an election, it often leads to surprising results. Addison did not really go so far as to buy votes; but he did hire Charles Melzar, one of the Corners young men, to come to work at cutting wood near our maple grove on the day of the school-meeting, promising him a gallon of syrup if he would work all day. That agreement was of course designed to keep him away from the meeting. Asa and he also hatched a plot which not only caused merriment, but a good deal of irrelevant joking, when the facts came out.

On the day before the school-meeting there had come what we termed a "robin snow," that is to say an inch of snow, perhaps, which soon went off. Asa and Addison were astir early that morning, and the former going to Neighbor Murch's, borrowed their hound dog. Leading the animal down across the meadows, he started a fox, or at least found the track of one, upon which he laid the hound. Then there was cheery music as the chase led over the cleared pasture lands above and beyond the Corners.

Waiting only till the hound was running well, Asa went to the Corners and got out Lige Davis, Jerry Cross and one other whose name I have now forgotten. Asa had not seen the fox, but he somehow made these three loafers believe that it was a "silver gray," the skin of which would be worth not less than thirty dollars. They therefore loaded their guns and set off with Asa over the hills, tramping deviously through woodlots and over ridges, for four or five hours. At last, the hound ran the fox to a burrow in a steep pasture side, about two miles from the Corners; all concerned were by this time tired from the tramp; and if Lige and Jerry remembered the school-meeting at all in the excitement of getting a fox, they deemed it of minor importance.

After some discussion of the best modes of getting

the fox out, Asa left them to watch the burrow, while he went off to borrow a shovel and crow-bar; but instead of immediately procuring these needful tools, he came across the country to the schoolhouse, leaving these three voters, guarding a fox's hole!

It was high time Asa was coming around, too, if he was to vote; for the meeting had been appointed for two o'clock in the afternoon, and it was three already. Addison, Halstead and I, and in fact nearly every boy in the district were there, as well as the men. There was antagonism between the two factions. Almost immediately after arriving the voters and also the boys drew asunder in two parties with covert glances to and fro, each side estimating the strength of the opposition. Tibbetts, a thick, heavy, rather corpulent man, with a face somewhat reddened from hard drinking, walked pompously about, hemming impatiently as he conversed in low, hoarse tones with the Corners men.

Before the meeting was called to order, Addison had taken a seat about midway the room, where he could hear much that was said on both sides. After every few minutes I noticed that he went to a window and glanced along the road. Several times, too, I observed that Tibbetts was watching him with an unmistakably hostile expression.

After a time Tibbetts called his boy (not his son, but a lad named Reuben Hale whom he had taken) and despatched him hastily on some errand. Reuben would not tell the other boys where he was going; but we saw that he went along our road instead of going back to the Corners, and that he was making haste.

Meanwhile the Old Squire arrived; and nearly every one in the district having by this time reached the schoolhouse, district clerk Batchelder rapped on the teacher's desk to call the meeting to order. The posted notice for the meeting was then read and some one nominated the Old Squire as "moderator." Every one seemed to say "Aye;" and he accordingly

stepped to the desk and began business in the usual manner, calling for Mr. Glinds' account, as school agent, of the expenditures of school money during the year.

Neighbor Edwards made the usual motion to accept the account. Tibbetts seconded the motion, but took the opportunity to make a few remarks.

"I move to accept the agent's report," he said. "But in doing so I don't say I am satisfied with it. I ain't.

"Fact is," he continued, "that a few, fine-feelin' scholars in this district have got to runnin' things quite too much to suit their own notions. The agent had a good 'nough master hired, at a low price, in the fust place, to teach the school last winter. Samuel Lurvey was a smart boy, and he had grit enough to keep order, too. But he wasn't quite toney enough and high-flown enough to suit four or five scholars in this district, who all come from one place I could mention; so they began pickin' on him and plaguin' him. When they found he was like to warm their hides for 'em, they got in the Parson Supervisor, a lofty-nosed, finicky sort of man, and turned him out. It was all a cut-and-dried plan to drive Sam Lurvey out and get the man they wanted in his place. I saw through it all plain enough, from the beginning.

"Wal, they got their man and paid him about twice as much as would hire a good-enough master, and put off the school till into the dead of winter, too.

"And now I hear that they are planning to do the same thing agin, next winter. I heard the other day that these four or five scholars had already made a bargain with their man to take the school another winter, at his own price! Now what kind of a way is that to do business in a school district and in a free country? Have we got to be ruled here by a few little upstarts who think they know a great deal more than their elders?

"Now, I say no, and what I am here for to-day is to elect an agent who will do as he thinks best in spite of such nonsense, and will hire teachers as cheap as he can."

Tibbetts said this in a harsh, aggressive tone of voice and with many hard glances around the room. The ground he took was adroitly chosen, and in alluding to the liberties of voters, he had touched a responsive chord with many. Yet the most of those present knew that it was in reality an evil-minded appeal.

No one made any response, for some moments. All knew that there was ill-feeling; and no one desired to add to it, although the best men in the district differed from Tibbetts.

The Old Squire sat at the desk, dispassionately, as presiding officer, and did not make haste to close any discussion that might be needed to clear up the questions at issue. At last he said, "The motion to accept the report is seconded; those in favor will say aye," etc.

All voted aye, as is customary on such a report.

Then after a moment I saw Addison get up from his seat. I was astonished that he should attempt to speak. I feared he would make a failure.

He rose quite coolly, however, and said, "Mr. Chairman, there is just a word I should like to say."

The Old Squire slowly nodded to recognize him.

Tibbetts, however, interposed. "I object," said he. "This youngster is not a voter. We're not here to hear boy's talk."

The Chairman looked a little perplexed.

But Addison said, "It is not necessary, I think, that a person should be a voter. Any one who has a legal interest in the proceedings of the meeting has a right to address it. I am a scholar, drawing money in this district, and have such an interest."

Tibbetts did not dispute this point; and just then

Tim Darnley, from the back seat, drawled out, "Let the young rooster crow!"

This caused a laugh; and Addison, turning to him with a bow, and another to the Chairman, said, "Thank you. I will 'crow' quite briefly."

They laughed again at that; so he had the advantage of the laugh to begin on.

"I suppose," Addison said pleasantly, "that I am one of the 'four or five upstart scholars' to whom the gentleman, our postmaster, has alluded. I wish to say that I think he has put the matter of our running the school to suit our own notions in an untrue light. I am sure that he is wholly misinformed about it. I think, too, that he has taken an unjust prejudice against us. All that I, or any one of the four or five others to whom he alludes, wanted last winter was a good school. We had a right to such a school, and a right to obtain it, if we could, by fair means. Now what were the facts? I will state them and state them correctly, although I may seem to contradict the gentleman in doing so. The agent hired Master Lurvey, believing that he would do well, no doubt. But he proved to be ignorant and wholly unfit. He was rough and rude, inflicting unreasonable punishments and using improper language in the schoolroom, not once or twice, but every day. To say that he was 'a good enough teacher' is merely to say what every scholar in school and every voter in this district knows to be false. The supervisor for these reasons advised him to withdraw, and he did so; — and here I want to say that Mr. Furness seemed to us all to be a well-educated and clear-minded man, and by no means 'lofty-nosed,' or 'finicky.' I should call him just the reverse of that.

"After Sam Lurvey left, we had no teacher, and it is true that six or eight of us were much in favor of hiring Joel Pierson. Why? Because he is known to be the best teacher in the town. Anything wrong in that?

"It is true, too, that we urged the agent to hire him, even although he had to pay a high price. That is what, I understand, the gentleman most objects to — the high price. For no one disputes that Master Pierson taught a fine school.

"Well, now, let's see about that high price and how it affected the length of the school. We who wanted Joel Pierson saw that point at once and knew that it would make the winter term short. What did we do? I'll tell you. We joined works, chopped cord-wood in the snow, got teams, drew it off to market at the village, and raised thirty-two dollars extra money, every cent of which we turned into the school money. With that money extra we had a week more school last term, with a good teacher, than we would have had if Sam Lurvey had taught out the term!

"We have some more money raised, too, which we are planning to add to the district's money for another winter, so as to have a longer school and give every scholar in the district the benefit of it.

"These are the facts about this matter, gentlemen. I should not get up here, at my age, to address you in school-meeting, if the truth had not needed telling."

With that Addison sat down; and I know that every one thought that he had made his points pretty well.

But Tibbetts was wrathy. "Wal, we've heard the young rooster," he exclaimed. "He's quite a crower, quite a palaverer, with self-conceit enough in his hide to tell us all what to do and what not to. But I guess the voters have got something to say about it, and I move that we proceed to elect a school agent. Great pity our young cock o' doodle here isn't old enough to have for agent. He would save us all the trouble of hiring masters and everything else. He knows all about it and more too."

Addison turned a little red, but kept smiling and

said nothing further, although several laughed at Tibbetts' coarse raillery.

Immediately there was separation of voters into groups again where candidates for agent were proposed and discussed in low tones.

The Old Squire kept his seat in the desk after announcing that a vote for agent might now proceed, in the usual manner, which consisted simply in placing a hat on the desk in which each voter deposited his vote.

The boys stood about, looking on, and laughing a little at everything that occurred; — for it is thus that the American boy gets his education in local government affairs.

Addison, I noticed, still kept an eye out the window along the roads; and I saw that Tibbetts whom I watched covertly, as a common enemy, was uneasy and went several times to the window, himself.

The two candidates at length agreed on were our neighbor, Mr. Murch, and Simeon Davis at the Corners. Murch was our man, of course; while Davis was the candidate of the Tibbetts party.

Quite slowly the voters approached the hat, one by one, and dropped in their votes, each consisting of a bit of paper having the candidate's name written on it, with a lead pencil. Addison had brought two sheets of paper and wrote the votes. Tibbetts stood by and watched each vote as written. Each knew almost exactly how the score stood between the two parties, from the outset.

After fifteen minutes, perhaps, the Chairman asked, "Are your votes all in, gentlemen? If so we will make the count."

"No," said Tibbetts. "I have not voted yet. I call for more time." It was plain that he was waiting for something, or some one.

"Very well," responded the Old Squire. "I suppose there need be no haste, although as much or more time than usual has elapsed."

"Wal, I claim more time," said Tibbetts.

"So be it," replied the Chairman.

For ten minutes or more Tibbetts conversed with first one, then another of his party; he then called little Jimmy Davis out of doors and sent him off at a run towards the Corners. Re-entering the house he asked for a temporary suspension of the vote for agent and proposed that a vote for district clerk should be first taken, also that the matter of teacher's board and schoolhouse fuel should be considered.

"This is unusual — to interrupt a vote in process of polling," remarked the Old Squire. "I'm not sure that I have any warrant for so doing." After some little discussion, however, the votes in the hat were thrown in the stove, and the strength of the two parties tested by voting for a clerk.

A tie-vote resulted. No choice being effected, the fuel was set up and bid off by Mr. Wilbur at forty cents per week; and as usual the Old Squire took the teacher's board at the nominal sum of one dollar per week; that, indeed, was the old gentleman's annual offer, in order to prolong the school.

Mr. Edwards, our candidate for clerk, then withdrew; and the other, William Darnley, was unanimously elected. This was a mere maneuver, however, to bring Tibbetts to time; the office of clerk is unimportant.

By this time it was four o'clock; and the meeting having been called for two o'clock, there was no longer any excuse for delay.

"We will now revert to the vote for agent," said the Chairman. Addison again wrote two sets of votes and the hat was placed on the desk for them. Still Tibbetts held back his vote, talking with his men and glancing out of the window from time to time. The Old Squire was on the point of calling for a count, when Addison whispered a word to him and again there was a delay of some minutes. We then heard feet

in the entry outside and Asa Doane entered with the general appearance of a man who has made a forced march.

"They are now voting for school agent, Asa," Addison remarked. "The candidates are Cyrus Murch and Simeon Davis. Will you have a vote?"

"I object!" shouted Tibbetts. "I challenge his vote. He is not a legal voter."

"Yes, I be," said Asa, stoutly. "I pay a poll tax in this town and I've made my home at the Old Squire's for the last two or three years. I keep my trunk and all my things there. It's the only home I've got, anyhow. Ain't that so, Squire?"

The old gentleman corroborated his statement, as to his trunk, and said that so far as he knew, Asa had no other domicile.

In great glee Addison handed Asa a Murch vote which he deposited in the hat.

Tibbetts was furious and made use of strong language, denouncing Asa's ballot as a fraud and threatening legal measures. Asa began to approach him, evidently with the intention of demonstrating his rights by the strong arm; and the Old Squire called vigorously for order. Hasty feet were heard now again in the entry, and Charles Melzar came in, looking somewhat sheepish as well as out of breath. I shall never forget how Addison's countenance fell at sight of him. He seemed a good deal astonished as well as chagrined. The fact was that Tibbetts had sent so forcible and perhaps so threatening a message to Melzar, up in our sap-woods, that the latter had judged it best to break his compact with Addison and hurry to the scene of the election.

Tibbetts at once approached Melzar and put a vote in his hand, with the air of a man who is leading a horse to its stall. Rather shamefacedly Melzar put the vote in the hat, Addison regarding him meantime with a look of withering scorn.

It is not customary for a candidate to vote for himself; but Tibbetts, after another glance along the road, put a vote in Davis' hand and the latter approached the hat and voted.

Addison, however, instantly beckoned our Mr. Murch who came up and did likewise — both candidates voting for themselves! This is legal, but in bad taste.

A count of the votes was then called. The hat was very closely watched and carefully emptied of its contents. Tibbetts stood by and saw every slip of paper as the Old Squire read the name on it. The clerk recorded the votes, then, while all stood expectant, counted them and announced that Mr. Murch had received seventeen votes, and Mr. Davis eighteen. Davis was then declared elected; and the Old Squire administered the usual oath of office to him. Our party was defeated. Tibbetts openly exulted and swaggered about the room. He was in nowise inclined to be good-natured, either; the absence of Lige Davis and Tim Darnley had given him much uneasiness; he evinced greater spite against Addison than ever.

"You little impertinent, over-forward jack-a-dandy, you," he exclaimed, shaking his fist toward him. "You didn't fetch it off, did ye! If you's my boy, I'd take ye home and tan yer hide with a hoss-whip."

Addison paid no attention to this outburst; he did not much care for idle talk like that; but Asa Doane shouldered snugly up to Tibbetts and, looking in his face, said, "What's that you remarked, Mr. Tibbetts?" Tibbetts did not think it well to repeat it.

The new agent took the schoolhouse key from the old one, and we all went home.

On our side we felt sure that our cause had been that of education and of progress. But a majority of the voters had decided against us and the result had to be borne with patience. The majority must rule in our land even if the majority is mistaken and, alas, evil-

intentioned. For it is useless to dispute that the majority is sometimes in the wrong. There is then but one thing for the more intelligent minority — patience.

Addison hardly spoke on the way home; he felt so badly, in fact, that he could scarcely eat supper. There was deep gloom throughout the house. Theodora and Ellen had met us in the yard as we returned; and Addison's first words to them were, "No Joel next winter. It will be another Sam Lurvey. Tibbetts has beaten us."

If we had heard even of war or other sudden national calamity there could hardly have been longer faces at the supper table, although Halstead enjoyed Addison's extreme discomfiture.

"Gram!" he broke forth. "You ought to have heard our young rooster crow down at school-meeting! He's going to make a champion crower, I tell you. He flapped his wings in big style but he dropped them a little when he saw Charles Melzar come in."

No one laughed or paid the least attention to this sally. Then Asa Doane tried to create a diversion and cheer us up, by relating how he had left Lige Davis and Tim Darnley watching at the fox-hole, while he was racing across the country to vote. That raised a slight wave of merriment; for it was evident that this prank had greatly disturbed Tibbetts who was expecting them and awaiting their arrival, to vote his ticket throughout the meeting.

Asa's account of the stratagem was the first the Old Squire had heard of the matter. He listened to the story, but did not laugh at it. "Asa, did you get those fellows off up there to keep them from school-meeting?" he asked.

"Wal, Squire," said Asa, looking a little queer, "I thought 'twas a good morning for foxin'; and I kinder thought, too, that they might as well be foxin' as votin' on the wrong side."

"Asa, I'm ashamed of you!" exclaimed the old

gentleman; but he was looking at Addison instead of Asa, when he said it; and I noticed that Addison colored up more than I had ever seen him before. It was a day of mortification for him. All his efforts had failed; and his scheming, too, had gone for naught. Worse still, it had added a shade of disgrace to our defeat. No cause is ever much strengthened by ruses like that compact with Melzar.

As soon as supper was over, Addison set off for the sugar lot and I followed him; for we had neglected the sap during the whole afternoon. On coming where Melzar had chopped wood till near four o'clock, Addison stopped and flew out in a greater burst of temper than I had ever before seen him indulge in. "The sneak!" he exclaimed. "Promised me fair and square — and broke his word the moment my back was turned! Not one drop nor sniff of syrup will I give him for what he has done. I'll see him in Guinea first!"

"I suppose he didn't dare refuse to quit, after Tibbetts sent for him," said I. Ad fairly stamped the snow he was so charged with pent-up ire. "O, that old rascal!" he exclaimed. "But I will worst him yet!" (shaking his fist at a maple). "By the great Horn Spoon, I will beat him yet!"

After this Addison scarcely uttered a word all the evening, a circumstance which led Halstead to remark that our "young rooster" had lost his voice. But we were all somewhat glum at the Old Squire's, for a week or more, so strong a hold had this contest taken upon us, and so much that was unpleasant and regrettable mingled with the mortification of defeat. I remember that little Wealthy gave a sigh at the breakfast table one morning and said she hoped there never would be another school-meeting. "Why?" said Halstead.

"'Cause," grumbled Wealthy shortly. "It has made us all 'most sick. Ad's sick, and Doad is sick;

and Nell is as mumpy as she was when she had the real mumps."

The Old Squire glanced around and remarked that it was time we forgot that school-meeting and turned our thoughts in healthier directions. The old gentleman attempted a diversion by speaking of Fast Day which was appointed for the seventeenth of April. Theodora tried to second the effort, by remarking pleasantly that we might improve the day by fasting, to do penance for any recent errors or mistakes we might have committed. This little sally was meant for a harmless pleasantry; but Addison, who was very sore on the subject of recent errors, took it home to himself and cast a rather sour glance at the well-meaning humorist. I saw her trying to explain it away to him out in the wood-house after breakfast. Addison, in fact, had fallen into a bad state of mind: he was abstracted and evidently harbored revengeful thoughts.

For some reason, misfortunes as well as storms appear to come in groups. Next afternoon, while hauling our hogshead of maple syrup home from the Aunt Hannah Lot, we met with a disaster which quite confounded us, and was a source of chagrin ever afterwards.

During the fortnight or more that we had been boiling sap, the syrup had been stored daily in a molasses hogshead which had been bought at the village, cleansed and set for the purpose in a back corner of the sap-house.

But now that the sap had ceased to flow and syrup-making was over for the season, Addison and I yoked old Bright and Broad, put them to the ox-sled — for the farm road to the lot was still icy — and drove over to get the season's product of sweets, to be divided between us and the Old Squire at home.

The hogshead was full, or nearly so, but after driving the bung carefully we rolled it on the sled and trigged it securely, as we thought, with two large sticks

of four-foot wood. It was very heavy, weighing not less than eight hundred pounds; I remember that it was all we could both do to roll it upon the sled.

Addison then set off to drive home with it. Near the line fence between the Aunt Hannah Lot and the old farm there is a little ascent of a hundred feet in length or more, with hazel clumps on each side of the farm road. As the oxen were toiling slowly up this ascent, they suddenly stopped. A bear, as we afterwards saw by its tracks, had crossed the road here that very morning. Horned cattle as well as horses will smell a bear for hours after one has passed.

At first the oxen snuffed the ground; then they bawled and sprang furiously forward. The jerk displaced the trig. Off went the hogshead, and away it rolled down the hill!

I was coming on behind the sled. By the time the hogshead reached me, it was going so rapidly that I had to jump for my life to get out of the way. It whirled past, rolled off the lower side of the road and struck a maple stump.

When it struck the stump, out flew both heads, and the syrup was thrown at least ten feet each way! Glug, glug, out it went, and ran down over a dirty snowbank!

Addison and I stood petrified at the suddenness and extent of the catastrophe.

The snowbank absorbed the entire contents of the hogshead. That day there was one sweet spot in Maine, sweeter than "sweet home."

Gram and the girls were great mourners.

The Old Squire said very little about it.

As for Addison and myself, our disgust was too great for words!

CHAPTER XVIII

ADDISON'S "WAR" WITH TIBBETTS

MAY-DAY came and passed; and according to custom thereabouts the boys were now hanging May-baskets to the girls, evenings. On the night of May 4th, Addison, Thomas, Halstead, Ned Wilbur and I set off with two May-baskets apiece, eight in all, for the Corners where we intended to hang several to the girls living there, and also to visit three farmhouses near the grist-mill, two miles beyond.

There was no moon, but the night was still and warm, with the spring brooks roaring and the frogs peeping in the swamps. Theodora and Ellen wanted to go; and at length it was agreed that they and Catherine Edwards with Thomas should set off together, taking neighbor Edwards' horse and wagon, and drive over past the Corners, about a mile and a half, to what was locally known as "the picnic grove." There was a cart trail leading off the highway into this grove, and here they agreed to turn in quietly, hitch up the horse and wait for us boys to come on afoot after we had hung a number of baskets at the Corners. They were to take no part in the frolic at the Corners, but wait there for us to join them, later.

As it chanced they were obliged to wait much longer than they or we expected. For we were hotly chased by a party of the Corners girls and boys, and only saved ourselves from capture by taking refuge in the woods half a mile to the northward, where we lay hidden for an hour or more before our pursuers retired and gave up the search.

In consequence, it was past ten o'clock before we were able to reach the picnic grove. Thomas and the girls, in fact, had come to the conclusion that we had been taken captive and shut up for the night. We explained our absence and recounted our adventures; then, leaving the horse and wagon concealed in the grove, we proceeded along the road to Miller Harland's house, half a mile distant, to hang a basket for Alice Harland.

I do not know how late it had grown, for none of us carried a watch, but presume that it must have been past eleven o'clock.

"It will be too bad to knock on their door and rouse them all at this time of night," Theodora said. "Let's pin the basket to the front door and go away without knocking, this time. Alice will find it in the morning."

This less boisterous plan was adopted; and after pinning up a basket for Alice we went on toward the house of a farmer, named Merrill, to leave a basket there for his daughter Lizzie.

There was a long hill to climb and we had reached the summit when we heard a horse and wagon, toiling slowly up from the other side.

"Wonder who is out at this time o' night?" exclaimed Thomas in a low voice, for in that sparsely settled community, it was somewhat unusual to find persons abroad at that hour.

"Maybe the Merrills, themselves," said Catherine. "Let's get out of sight." Thereupon we all covertly left the road and hid in a clump of hemlock shrubs on the south side of it, till the wagon should pass us.

It came slowly up the hill. "Guess they've got a heavy load," whispered Ned. He and Addison peeped out as the team went by. "It's one man alone," whispered Addison, for it was starlight and not uncommonly dark. "What's that he's got in the hind part of the wagon?"

"Looks like a barrel," said Ned. "'Tis a barrel." The wagon had passed by this time and we all stepped forth.

"That looks like Tibbetts' old express wagon," said Tom. "I believe it is, and I shouldn't wonder if that was Tibbetts, himself, driving."

We had started to go on down the hill, when Addison suddenly said, "You go ahead and hang the baskets. I'm going back along."

"What for?" said Tom.

"O, I've got a reason," replied Addison.

"Don't, Ad," said Theodora. "I wouldn't go chasing after that man."

Addison laughed. "Needn't wait for me at the grove. I shall be at home by the time you are," he said and hurried back along the road, in the wake of the team that had passed.

We went on and hung a May-basket for Lizzie Merrill, then retraced our steps to the grove and all rode homeward. There was little fun in it; it was too late at night.

On the orchard hill, just below the Old Squire's, we overtook Addison.

"Well, what did you find out?" Tom asked him.

"O, not much," he replied, evasively; but we noticed that he seemed jolly and a good deal amused about something. He would not answer any questions that night.

Next forenoon, however, while he and I were ploughing in the south field, I asked him if that were really Tibbetts whom we had seen the previous night.

"No," said Addison, "that was Simeon Davis, our new school agent. But 'twas Tibbetts' horse and wagon," he continued after a moment, "and I think I've got that old sinner in a tight place."

"Do you think it was a barrel of rum?" I asked.

"I'm sure it was," said Addison. "I followed along after the wagon as close as I dared and once or twice

got quite near. When at last he stopped at Tibbetts' store, I went around through a field and came up close behind the place. Tibbetts was there waiting for him and came out, but did not have a lantern. They scarcely spoke; and as soon as they could get the barrel out of the wagon, they took the horse and wagon into Tibbetts' stable. I slipped round the corner while they were unharnessing and smelled of the barrel. It smelled rummy. I rolled it just a little easy, too, and heard it swash. Then Tibbetts and Davis came back to the platform of the store and opened the bulkhead door there, leading into the cellar. They made scarcely a bit of noise and worked pretty fast, too. In half a minute they had that barrel down the stairs and rolled it away in the cellar. I couldn't tell what part of the cellar they had put it, for as soon as they got the barrel down the stairs, Tibbetts came back and, sticking his head out, glanced around and listened, then eased the bulkhead door down.

"After that they were down cellar there for fifteen or twenty minutes, and I guess they sampled the liquor, for when they came out Davis was sort of smacking his lips and I heard him say, 'Pooty good stuff, Mr. Tibbetts,' and Tibbetts said, ''Twill do.'

"And now," continued Addison with great satisfaction, "I think I know how that old fox has managed to get his liquor so long and beat the Law. We have all wondered how he did it, and have had the officers watching for him at the village and at the railroad station where his other goods and groceries come. But his liquor does not come that way at all. It comes over this hilly country road to the west, from over New Hampshire way somewheres. No one ever has thought of watching that road, for it doesn't seem to lead anywhere, you know. But that's the route the rum comes by; and Davis — the man he put in for school agent — does the hauling, between days."

"But do you suppose you have got evidence enough

to convict him in court?" I asked; — for I had heard a great deal about liquor cases since I came to the Old Squire's.

"I don't know," replied Addison a little doubtfully. "It takes strong evidence, for half the jurymen nearly always favor the rumseller; and if we were to summon Simeon Davis as a witness, he would most likely swear it was a barrel of kerosene, or vinegar. These old topers always side with the rumseller and will commit perjury, without turning a hair, in a liquor case.

"But I've got another plan," Addison continued, in a lower tone. "I think I can use this to trap Tibbetts another way. Perhaps it will not work, for he is as cunning as Old Nick, himself; but if it does work, I'll make him dance like a rat on a hot stove, see if I don't!"

My curiosity was much excited; but Addison would not say anything more that day.

Two evenings after, while he and I were on the way to the post office together, to get the papers, he told me he was going to say a word to Tibbetts that night. "You watch and see how he takes it," he added.

We went into the store and after standing about a few moments, till nobody else chanced to be near, Addison called for our mail, and as Tibbetts handed it to him, asked, "How does that barrel o' rum sell — the one you got in last Tuesday night at about twelve o'clock?"

Tibbetts started perceptibly and looked very hard at Addison, but did not reply.

"O, you are wasting time being so sly about it," Addison went on, coolly, "I know all about it, who hauled it, where it came from and where you've been getting all your other liquor for a year past. And the County Attorney will soon know, too."

Tibbetts, who had been visibly alarmed, now began to grin a little at the injudicious manner in which

Addison threw out his information, from mere bravado.

As soon as we were outside the store and on our way home, I asked Addison if it was not foolish to tell Tibbetts anything about it beforehand. "He thought you were a greenhorn," said I. "You've been and warned him now, and he will have time to get things all fixed before you can do anything."

"That was just what I wanted him to think," replied Addison. "But you wait and see. You know he has had the name of stopping letters at the post office. Two or three times folks have suspected him. Maybe he did, maybe he didn't; I don't know. I am sure he has no more principle than to do it. A man who will break the law constantly in one thing, is likely to in another, if he takes the notion. But it is a saucy business, breaking open another person's letter, you know, a state's prison offense. A liquor trial he would get out of, somehow; but if we could catch him stopping letters, we could make it hot for him. But I am not going to say anything more of this just now, and don't you," Addison continued.

Saturday Addison asked the Old Squire if he and I could drive to the village, to get us each a pair of summer shoes and some calico shirts, by way of a summer outfit. Permission being obtained, Gram, who knew nothing of Addison's schemes, suggested that Halstead should go with us, to purchase similar articles. Addison looked slightly nonplussed at this proposition, and at first opposed it, offering to buy the articles for Halse, and fetch them home to be tried on. Gram insisted that Halstead should go, however, and go he did; but after we had reached the village, and Halstead was at the shoe store, Addison made a signal to me to come away and leave him there. He and I then drove off together. At first I was much in the dark as to what was on foot. Addison explained it, however, as we went along.

"I want to see the County Attorney," said he. "I am going to notify him, in advance, that I shall mail a letter for him at our post office, Monday morning. I shall tell him that folks have suspected Tibbetts of opening other persons' letters, and that if he is that sort of postmaster, we want to find him out; and that this letter is to be a test — a decoy letter.

"I am going to explain about the liquor barrel," Addison continued. "Also some other facts, and ask Attorney Foster to be on the lookout Monday evening for a letter from me, mailed at our office. For I think that Tibbetts, when he sees a letter from me to the County Attorney in the office, will stop it and break it open, to find out what is going on. I am pretty sure he will, for he is just that kind of man. So I am setting a trap for him — a regular bear-trap; and if once I get his old paw into it, he has got to do as I tell him, or I'll have his skin nailed up to dry on my barn-door!"

This project on Addison's part excited me not a little. I do not think that the spirit which animated him was a wholly amiable one; but perhaps it was justifiable as such matters go.

"To make it all the surer," Ad went on, "I am going to call at the village post office, as we go back, and have a little talk with the postmaster there, who knows me pretty well. The mail bag from our small office at the Corners, you know, is taken to the village office first and is there opened and the letters put in the village bag. I am going to have a little talk with the postmaster there, give him a hint of what is on foot, and ask him to take particular notice of the letters that come from our office, Monday forenoon, to see whether there is one for the County Attorney. I want him to take such careful notice that he can testify if he should be called as a witness. You see," Ad continued, "if we can show that a letter was mailed at our office which never reached the village office we shall have a tight

squeeze on Tibbetts' fingers, particularly as it is a letter about him and his illegal traffic."

When we reached Attorney Foster's office I sat and held the horse while Addison made his call. He had to wait some time, and when he at length got an audience the matter came near miscarrying altogether; for Attorney Foster said it was an irregular affair which he did not care to have any connection with. But when Ad had made the whole matter plain and told what we had seen the night we hung the May-baskets, the lawyer finally laughed and bade him go ahead, adding that if Tibbetts was innocent no harm would be done him or anybody else.

We drove back to the village, where Addison saw the postmaster as he had planned. We then looked up Halse and drove home.

Addison and I had been so much engrossed in his project that we hurriedly bought calico shirts two or three sizes too large for us, much to Gram's disgust. Halse had bought an excellent fit; and he blurted out at the supper table that we had run off and left him at the village, and that he believed we had driven a good ways, for Old Sol was in a sweat when we came back. No questions were asked, however, and the topic of conversation was changed.

Next day Addison wrote his letter to the County Attorney, stating what we had seen a few nights previously; but it was largely a repetition of what he had already told him. Monday morning we went to the office and mailed it. Before starting, however, Addison showed the envelope to the Old Squire and asked him to bear in mind that on that day we went to the post office to mail such a letter. The old gentleman wished to know why he was writing such a letter and what it contained. Ad explained briefly, not entirely to the Old Squire's satisfaction, although he did not say much.

On our way to the Corners Mr. Wilbur overtook

and gave us a ride. Addison bethought himself to show the letter to him, and asked him to take notice, after we got to the office, that he mailed it that morning, and to remember the day and the date. Mr. Wilbur said he would do so, but he looked a little curious, and to satisfy him Addison gave him a hint as to what was on foot.

When we reached the post office Ad went in alone at first, so that Tibbetts would see him. Afterwards, when Mr. Wilbur came in, Addison stepped up and dropped the letter into the letter box. I was standing near, and saw Tibbetts glance at us when the cover of the slip rattled. We then came away.

The next day, in the afternoon, the Old Squire drove to the village; and Gram sent us down with him to change our calico shirts for smaller ones. Addison seized this opportunity to see the postmaster, and learned from him that no letter to the County Attorney had passed through the mail that day. "He may be holding it," the postmaster suggested. "I will keep watch for a week."

Saturday, following, Addison found excuse for going to the village again, and learned that his letter had not appeared at the post office there. We had now no doubt whatever that Tibbetts had stopped the letter and destroyed it after reading the contents. It would have been necessary now merely to obtain the affidavits of the County Attorney and the village postmaster, along with those of Mr. Wilbur and the Old Squire, to put postmaster Tibbetts in an exceedingly unpleasant situation. I suppose it may have been our duty to enforce the law. Crime ought not to be covered up, nor shielded from its proper penalty. But Addison was a boy who, when he had an object in view, never lost sight of it; he would turn any and every circumstance to account to forward that object. All that winter and spring he had worked to beat Tibbetts and get a school agent appointed who would hire Joel Pier-

son the following winter. It seemed as if he cared little for anything else.

A few nights afterwards we went to the post office, and on the way there Addison gloated over his victory. "We've got his old paw in the trap," he exclaimed, "and now he shall do as I say, or we'll roast him."

"Well, we are going to have a new postmaster, aren't we?" said I.

"O, I don't know," replied Addison, indifferently. "If Tibbetts will do as I say about the school, I don't much care for turning him out."

"But he isn't fit for postmaster," said I. "A man that will break open letters ought not to be kept in as postmaster."

"Of course he hadn't," replied Ad. "But if he will give in and help hire Joel Pierson, I'll let him go on awhile."

I was not clear in my mind as to this.

"I guess we will stir him up a little, to-night," Ad continued. "He doesn't realize that he is caught yet, you know. So I'm going to rattle the trap chain a little, just to let the old bear see the fix he is in, and then punch him a few times with a pole. I shouldn't wonder if he showed his old teeth and growled, at first. But we have got him hard and fast. You keep your ears open for all he says. He may say or do something that there ought to be a witness for."

We went into the store and Addison asked for the Old Squire's mail. Tibbetts was putting up kerosene for little Mamie Davis who had come in with a can. After she had gone out, he came around to the enclosed space where the post office desk and box frame stood, and handed Addison our mail, without speaking.

Addison took it and said, "Well, Mr. Tibbetts, how does the new barrel hold out? Most time to haul home another one, isn't it?"

The grocer was a heavy, red-faced man; he looked at Addison with an expression of hatred actually venomous.

"Look-a-here, young impudence, you take your mail and get out of this store," he said in a low but really savage tone.

"O certainly, Mr. Postmaster," Ad replied, going to the door.

"I shouldn't have come into the post office if I had not had business here. I am within my rights."

In the door he stopped, and turning toward Tibbetts who had taken a step after us, said, "By the way, Postmaster, there is something a little queer about a letter that was mailed here last Monday morning at eight o'clock. You probably remember the letter I refer to. It was addressed to the County Attorney at the village. Now you thought, the other day, Postmaster, that I was a greenhorn to say anything about that liquor barrel to you, and to go and write a letter in that way to the County Attorney. But it wasn't so green as it looked. That letter which you stopped and broke open was a decoy letter, mailed here on purpose to trap you."

Tibbetts' angry face changed color a little. "Yes, Postmaster," Addison continued, "we know about your tricks with letters here; that letter was to catch you; and we've caught you. The County Attorney was notified the Saturday before, that this letter was to be mailed Monday morning; and the postmaster at the village was also notified to be on the lookout for it. He is ready to make oath that it was not in the bag, neither on that day nor any day this week."

"No such letter was ever mailed here!" shouted Tibbetts.

"Not too fast, Postmaster," said Addison coolly. "I looked out for that part. I have three witnesses of the fact that I brought the letter here, two of whom

can make oath that they saw me put it in the letter box, under your very nose."

Tibbetts was not lacking in intelligence. He perceived at once that he was in a fix. His face had turned quite white, either from rage, or sudden apprehension. The effects of his bad habits suddenly showed in him. We noticed that the hand he thrust out against the case of letter boxes shook and that his coarse hard nerve suddenly failed him. Ad and I, thus far, had stood ready to run, if he attacked us; but now our fear of him abated; we felt instinctively that he would not be able to harm us much.

"Oh, we've got you, Tibbetts, don't you think we haven't!" exclaimed Ad. "You walked right into the trap. It isn't a liquor case at all, this time, though we can make a pretty case out of that, if we choose. But it is something, this time, that you cannot get out of by paying a fine. It isn't the Maine Law but Uncle Sam's postal laws that you're foul of. We've got you now where we can handle you. I have been getting this thing ready for you, for some time, and now I've got you where I can break you. I can close your rum hole here, take this post office away from you and put you in the state prison. You cannot stop a letter to the County Attorney for nothing, you know!"

Tibbetts' visage was a study for me as I stood in a species of juvenile fascination, watching him. To this day I can see the purple and white spots that showed on his face. He did not speak, but stood staring at Addison.

"I want you to understand," Addison continued, walking up closer to him now, looking him full in the face with cool scrutiny, speaking, too, with an intensity of suppressed feeling which made me glance at him curiously, "I want you to understand that I have beaten you at last. There's been trouble in this school district for two years; but it was you and I who have really been doing the fighting; and now I've beaten

you and got you in a corner; and I'll put the screws on you, too — unless," Addison continued after a little pause, still looking him in the eye, but changing his tone, "unless you want to knuckle down and do as I say about the school. Joel Pierson is a good teacher. Everybody admits that. We want him here next winter. Now, Postmaster, if you give Simeon Davis the word to hire him, right off, pretty quick now, before he is otherwise engaged, why, I may not press this matter, just yet. Understand?"

Still Tibbetts stood looking at Addison, measuring him, so to speak, and pondering the situation, without speaking. I could see that he was somewhat broken up.

"Joel Pierson is going to teach this school next winter anyhow, you see if he doesn't," Addison said confidently. "If you stand out, I'll put you behind bars. When you are gone, we will choose another agent who will hire Master Pierson."

"Wal, I never said anything agin Pierson, or agin hirin' him," Tibbetts said at length in a changed, conciliatory tone. "Did you ever hear me say that I didn't want him?"

"O that's all right, Postmaster," Ad exclaimed, with a grim laugh. "You and I understand each other pretty well. I don't trust you at all, in anything. But if Simeon Davis writes to Joel Pierson Monday morning, offering him the school, I shall know what that means. If he doesn't, the United States marshal will be around here by Wednesday." And with that we came away.

I was, I remember, much staggered in mind by the compact which Ad had made. I asked him as we went home if he thought such a bargain was the right thing. He laughed and said it was the way to get a good school the next winter.

"But what suppose the Old Squire would say?" I asked him.

"Well, I don't mean to say much about this at home for a while," Addison replied. "I'm pretty sure that the County Attorney will not take it up, because, as he said, it is irregular procedure; and I do not think that the postmaster at the village will move in the matter, unless complaint is made. I calculated that I held the game in my own hands; and I've played it in the way I wanted to. I've got Tibbetts where I can chuck his old head under water if he doesn't do as I bid him."

Addison wrote, himself, to Master Pierson on Monday and received a reply from him saying that agent Davis had written that day offering him the school! When Addison read this letter at the supper table Wednesday evening, there was a general exclamation of surprise as well as pleasure. The Old Squire himself appeared to be astonished and puzzled, then recalling the matter of the letter to the County Attorney, the outside of which he had seen, he remarked that it looked as if Tibbetts was trying to curry favor with us.

"That's what I think, sir," said Ad, giving me a nudge to keep quiet.

"Well, well," said Gram. "I can hardly believe it, but Tibbetts may not be so bad after all as we have thought he was; I suppose we ought to have charity."

This ingenuous remark made me feel rather queer; and it amused Addison so much that for some moments he sat fairly shaken with suppressed laughter. "Grandma," he said at length, "don't you waste any charity on Tibbetts. He didn't do this out of any kindness to us, you may be sure."

"I don't believe he did, either!" exclaimed the old lady, promptly rejecting her charity theory. "But I don't see what has got into him."

Theodora and the Old Squire looked more puzzled than ever.

"What has Ad been doing?" the former asked me, after supper; but I would not reveal anything, further than to wink knowingly and exasperatingly. The Old

Squire did not learn the particulars of the compact with Tibbetts for a year or more. When he did, he quite disapproved of it, and even declared that Addison, to some extent, rendered himself answerable for compounding an offense against the postal laws.

CHAPTER XIX

OUR FIRST GREAT SORROW

FARM work now came on apace. "Hot-beds" had to be prepared for the garden, since a Maine garden usually needs a little assistance at the start. Then came ploughing and harrowing for rye and oats, and later for wheat, then for potatoes and corn. Fences which had "winter-killed" beneath the deep snow drifts, had also to be repaired, so as to get the young cattle and colts out to pasture by May 15th; and then came sheep-washing, sheep-shearing and dipping the lambs again in "poke-stew."

But since this homely routine of farm work has been already described in the first book of these chronicles, I shall not hereafter dwell much on the details of it, but go on to the more notable incidents of this my second year at the Old Squire's.

During the first year we had lived with not much thought as to the future, or what we were to do in life; but now, ever after Master Pierson came among us, and we had begun the study of Latin, the stir of new ambitions began to be felt. There was, in truth, a budding of great hopes that year. The simple child life was over with us — gone never to return. Youth had come with its teeming schemes for the future.

True, we worked on the farm and played at times, much as before; yet it was with a difference. For now we were thinking much of money and how to make it for school expenses at the Academy.

The Old Squire, too, had seemed to catch something of the same spirit. He began to talk much of going

into business again, lumbering up at Three Rivers in the Province of Quebec, also of dairying with Jersey cows on a larger scale, and of raising hops, and even of embarking in the petroleum oil business, out in Canada West.

At heart the old gentleman earnestly desired to aid all six of us in getting an education. These new schemes of his were, as I now think, largely, if not wholly, on our account; but they filled Gram with uneasiness. "Joseph, what has come over you!" she often exclaimed that season. "To hear you talk anybody would think you were a young man just starting in life, instead of an old fellow, going on three score and ten. It isn't natural, Joseph. I'm afraid your mind is getting unsettled."

The Old Squire's eye would twinkle at that; and one evening I remember hearing him say, "Ruth, it seems to be the fashion now for Americans to make a fortune. I have been a little backward about that, I fear. So I must hurry around to keep up with present fashions."

"Don't you try to be too fashionable in your old age, Joe," replied Gram with considerable severity.

He went on scheming none the less. Time and again Addison and I surprised him figuring away with a lead pencil on a bit of board out in the wagon-house. Already he was planning to get out five hundred thousand of lumber that coming winter, from certain lots he owned up Lurvey's stream, in the Great Woods. He bought four spans of Prince Edward Island horses in the fall, had new logging camps built and laid in food supplies for a crew of twenty men to go to work in November.

Early one morning about the middle of May, there came a telegram — an unusual event at the farm — announcing the death of a brother-in-law of Gram, living over in Kennebec County, and known to us as "Uncle Dresser." He was supposed to be very well off as to

this world's goods; but even before his death there had been ill-natured contentions among certain of his relatives as to the disposition of his property; — troubles which were so distasteful to the Old Squire that he dissuaded Gram from attending the funeral which (the telegram announced) was to be on Thursday of that week. Both of them felt, however, that some one from our family ought to be present; and at length it was decided to have Theodora and myself set off, with Old Sol in the light wagon, and drive there, across country, the distance being nearly or quite forty miles.

It proved a momentous trip. We were gone four days, had a most exciting experience, and saw a very seamy side of human nature — as will be related in another place, hereafter.

Yet even this curious adventure was overshadowed by the sad affliction which fell on us a few weeks later.

According to custom the summer term of school at the old schoolhouse began on the first Monday in June; but the teacher hired by school agent Davis whom Tibbetts had succeeded in electing after so bitter a contest, proved wholly inefficient. Theodora and Ellen did not deem it worth while to attend. Addison, Halstead and I were too busy with the farm work to go, in any case. Boys in the district rarely went to school in summer, after they were twelve years old. Little Wealthy was therefore the only one to go from our place.

From the very first day of school there was complaint as to the condition of the schoolhouse. Nothing had been done by the neglectful agent to render it clean and sanitary after the long term, the previous winter. Nor had fuel been procured for cold, damp days such as often occur in Maine, during the early part of June. On the ninth day of the month a rain-storm had set in, which continued until the afternoon of the 11th.

That night little Wealthy came home looking ill, and complaining of a cold. She had sat and shivered all

day, she said. Gram gave her hot catnip tea, and put her to bed early; but shortly after midnight the Old Squire came up stairs and, waking Addison, sent him to the village for Dr. Green, who came during the latter part of the night.

It was not till breakfast, however, that the rest of us learned that Wealthy was seriously ill. Even then we did not realize that it was anything worse than a bad cold. Gram and the Old Squire wore grave looks, however; and before ten o'clock the doctor returned. He was still at the house with his little patient, up stairs, when we boys went in from the field, to dinner. Gram did not come down to table; the Old Squire told us that the doctor had pronounced it a case of diphtheria of a croupous type; and that he said such of us young folks as were not needed in the sick-room had better not go up.

We three boys, with the two hired men, therefore, went back to our work in the field. That day we were finishing our corn planting. By five o'clock we had it nearly done, and were covering the last six rows of seed, when Theodora came hastening out to us from the house. Her eyes were red from crying. "Little Wealthy is very, very sick, boys," were her first words. "She cannot get her breath. Nothing they do helps her. If you want to see her, alive, you must come quick!"

We dropped everything and ran to the house. But the child had expired before we reached it. It was as sudden as that. At the door we met Ellen, sobbing convulsively. She threw her arms about Theodora's neck, and they wept together.

The Old Squire came down stairs. "Your dear little cousin has passed away, my children," was all the old gentleman could find words to say to us.

The doctor came down, and after giving some precautionary directions, drove away.

The suddenness of the calamity affected me

strangely. A kind of stupefaction fell on me. I could not believe what they said, at first. It seemed impossible that Wealthy could be dead. I burst forth crying so uncontrollably, that Addison laid hold of my arm and hurried me out to the wagon-house. "You must not let yourself behave like that," he said reprovingly. "It is sad enough and bad enough without your setting up such a noise!" But for a long time I could not calm myself.

Halstead had disappeared. We did not see him again till late in the evening.

O, the solemnity and the black, bleak sorrow which brooded over the old farmhouse that night! It appeared to me that I could never go on living there under this crushing weight of grief. The sight of the closed door up stairs, and the tear-stained faces of Theodora and Ellen, filled me with unspeakable anguish.

As it came dark I remember retreating to a dim corner of the sitting-room, on the lounge, and was so loath to leave it to go to bed, that Theodora at length came in and, sitting beside me, held my hand for a long time, without speaking.

In our room, later that night, Addison tried in vain to cheer me by speaking of a trip which he had planned for us to take to the mountains up in the great woods, to search for tourmalines, amethysts and silver ore. I thought him utterly heartless to think of such things, at such a time, but know now that he felt quite as badly as I did, but possessed a more self-controlled, less emotional mind.

The same sense of wild anguish and bewilderment rested on me for several days, till after the funeral, when the little coffin stood in the sitting-room, and "Aunt Olive" had come, and Elder Witham preached a kindly sermon from the text, "It cometh up like a flower."

Thus sadly was broken, for the first time, our little

war-waif circle of six cousins at the Old Squire's; and all that now remained to us by which to remember Wealthy was that one small ambrotype, reproduced here.

Elsie Wilbur and one other — little Millie Darnley — who were at school at the same time, were taken sick of the same disease, namely, a bad cold followed by croupous diphtheria. All three were apparently from the same cause — sitting in a too cold schoolroom which was in an unsanitary condition.

At the Old Squire's we set little Wealthy's death down as one of the calamities of the year when Rum reigned in the school district. We believed that if the schoolhouse had been in charge of a careful school agent that summer, our winsome little cousin might still be with us. Davis was a neglectful sot. Tibbetts had made him so. Little Wealthy was the victim of the worthlessness of the one and the malice of the other. This thought embittered our hearts still more against our liquor-selling postmaster.

He was, in truth, the evil genius of our lives at the old farm, and at length — as I shall have to relate later — succeeded in involving Halstead in a disreputable affair which led him to run away from home.

CHAPTER XX

ADDISON'S JUGGERNAUT

FOR a fortnight, all through hoeing-time, the gloom of our recent bereavement rested on us heavily. Yet it is one of the kind provisions of Nature that all griefs, even that for this greatest of calamities, death, fade insensibly away as days pass.

Haying-time had now come around again, haying-time at the old farm. What memories of hot July suns, palm-leaf hats and perspiring faces rise at the thought of it!

Again I seem to smell the early morning odors from the swaths of grass, fresh-reeking from the scythes, or catch the noontide fragrance of the hot windrows of hay as we "tumbled" it up for the rack-cart, which came rattling out into the field. Again I hear the merry whit-te-whit of the whetstones, the low rip of the severed grass-stalks, the wearying note of the grindstone, and at last — after forenoons of infinite length — the welcome toot of the old dinner-horn.

Once more I see Theodora, or Ellen, or Halstead, coming afield in the blazing sunshine, bringing that longed-for jug of cold water, tempered with a dash of molasses and ginger to keep the inordinate quantities which we drank from hurting us. Yet again the loud black thunder-shower rises in drear gloom over the mountain, bent on drenching the whole day's batch of hay. And then what hurry and scurry there would be to pile a big load on the cart and rush it to the barn before the sheeted rain struck!

Such was "haying" before the days of farm machinery.

During all those first years of our sojourn at the old homestead in Maine, the seventy or eighty tons of hay, for a large stock of cattle and horses, had to be made and stored wholly by hand labor. Sixty acres of grass on upland, swale and meadow had to be mowed with scythes, raked by hand-rakes, and pitched on and off the hay-rack by hand-forks.

Little wonder that after four or five weeks of such labor, drinking so much water, perspiring so profusely and toiling so many hours under the hot sun, we emerged from the ordeal fearfully tanned, indeed, but perceptibly thinner, leaner, and sometimes sick.

The first relief from the hardest of the work came when the Old Squire purchased the first mowing-machine and the first horse-rake ever seen in that vicinity.

The clatter of that new mower set our farm-horses crazy at first, and for a while we were obliged to use a yoke of oxen to draw it, Halstead walking beside them with a goad-stick, while Addison sat on the machine and worked the levers. Even when propelled by slow ox-power, the new mower would cut as much grass as three men; and the horse-rake accomplished as much as four men.

It seemed to us then, fresh from those back-aching scythes, that a golden epoch of haying had dawned; and as is always the case, the hopefulness which sprang from those new inventions led us to dream of others that would do the rest of the hard work.

"Now if we could only contrive some way to pitch the hay on to the cart in the field and pitch it off in the barn, haying would be nothing but fun!" Addison used to say that summer, "I wonder if we couldn't?"

But the horse-fork which hoists an entire load at four forkfuls, swings it round and drops it in the mow, was then unknown to us, and seemed too difficult to be

made practical. At that time it looked easier to contrive some device for hoisting the hay upon the cart in the field; and I remember that Addison had talked a great deal about this as we mowed, raked and pitched the previous summer. He was always the most resourceful among us, although Halstead and I were keenly interested.

Invention, however, proved by no means an easy matter. He was unable to hit on anything which promised success for a long time; not until the following March, in fact, while we were working up the year's stock of fire-wood in the yard before the wood-shed.

Then one afternoon, I remember, Addison suddenly threw down his ax, shouting:

"I've got it! I'll take the 'lags' off our old threshing-machine and that pair of cart-wheels up at the north barn!" and he started to run for the barn.

He was up at the north barn much of the time after that; but in the course of a fortnight he had put together the most remarkable combination ever seen in that locality — either for loading hay or any other purpose. Rumors concerning it spread abroad, and people came to see it. For some reason it appeared to amuse everybody tremendously, and the old north barn floor, where Addison had set it up, rang with laughter on those early spring days.

But the sight of it was as nothing to the sound of it. For when in motion it made a truly awful noise, rumbling, squeaking and groaning; and some one soon nicknamed it "the howler."

Yet clumsy as it was, I am now quite positive that this was the first real hay-loader invented in America — for the hay-loading machines now on the market make use of the same principle which Addison studied out that spring, and involve no new idea. The new machines are comparatively light and portable, while Addison's was ponderous and clumsy, since he had

nothing to work with save the large wheels from an ox-cart and the "lags" and some other gear from two old worn-out threshing-machines. If I remember aright, the whole apparatus cost him not over eleven dollars.

The wheels of the two-wheeled ox-carts such as we then used were wholly of wood, hubs, spokes and fellies, and were very large and heavy, the hubs being fully twelve inches in diameter. Two of these huge wheels and the two small forward wheels of an old wagon furnished Addison with the wheeled gear for his hay-loader.

For picking the hay up in the field, after it is raked into windrows, he had perceived that some sort of revolving cylinder, or drum, with projecting teeth like those of a horse-rake, would be required; and to raise the hay from this gathering-drum to the top of the hay-rack at the rear end, and drop it there, he had to devise a long "carrier" of some sort running upward. For this latter essential, he made use of both sets of lags from the two old threshing-machines which I have mentioned — that is to say, the part of the threshing-machine on which the horses walk, and which runs on iron trucks up a little inclined track. As his carrier had to be fully sixteen feet long, he joined the two sets of lags in one, and set them in a strong, lofty frame.

A far lighter carrier would have answered as well, or better, but these old lags were all that he had to work with for this purpose.

The frame supporting this long carrier was made of white ash beams; and the carrier itself was put in motion by a large rotary cylinder, consisting of a hollow log of yellow-birch wood put on over the axle of the large wheels, between them, and attached rather loosely, yet strongly, to the hubs of the wheels, so as to revolve with them about the axle, and yet give some little play for turning the machine round in the field.

Addison had made a new, longer axle for the wheels,

with the ends of it projecting outward through them on each side. It was on the ends of the axle, outside the wheels, that the frame supporting the carrier rested; the other or forward end of the frame was attached to the bed-pieces of the hay-rack with two clevises having iron pins which could be dropped into place, or pulled out to cast the machine loose from the cart.

At the top the carrier revolved about a small axle set high in the frame. When the cart moved forward, the large wheels of the loader revolved, turning the cylinder which set the carrier in motion.

The other cylinder, or drum, which picked up the hay and passed it to the carrier, consisted merely of another hollow log off the same yellow-birch tree trunk, two feet in diameter and six feet long, put on the axle of the forward wagon-wheels and attached to the hubs, much as the other, so that it would turn with the wheels about the axle. The teeth — horse-rake teeth, shortened — were set in this second log drum, and were of a length nearly to touch the ground.

Addison carried the iron axle of these old wagon-wheels to a blacksmith and had it drawn out so as to extend four inches beyond the hubs outside; and to these projecting ends he attached the ash shafts which connected the drum and wheels to the wheels in front.

When the machine moved astride the windrow of hay, the drum turned with the wheels, picked up the hay and passed it to the carrier, which in turn passed it up the incline to the top of the hay-rack, where the man on the cart took it with a fork and loaded it.

To prevent the hay from falling off sidewise and being drawn into the wheels, or blown away by the wind, "guides," made of light strips of board, were set on each side. And to keep the hay going steadily up the carrier, Addison drove a row of tenpenny nails into each lag, allowing the heads to protrude about two inches. He also contrived a semicircular guide

behind the gathering-drum to keep the hay from falling back.

Gram, the girls, and everybody at the farm came out to see the machine the first time we drove into the field to get a load of hay with it. Several of our neighbors came running across lots, too, for we were making a fearful noise.

No amount of greasing would keep the "howler" quiet. It groaned and rumbled and creaked, till even steady old Bright and Broad rolled their eyes anxiously round to see what on earth was following them.

Gram laughed till she had to sit down on a stone and fan herself; but the Old Squire was not inclined to join in the hilarity. For some reason he considered it a wild scheme, although as a rule he was very tolerant of Addison's projects.

It must be admitted, however, that the loader worked pretty well. It picked up a windrow of hay and passed it up to the man on the cart as fast as the oxen could walk. It gathered the hay up quite clean, too, and required but little raking after.

It was necessary, however, that neither large stones nor stumps should lie concealed in the windrows under the hay. This had to be looked out for in advance when the hay was raked.

When the load was on, Addison pulled the two iron pins attaching the loader to the cart, and then drove to the barn, leaving it standing there in the field, to be hitched on again when we came back.

We considered it a success; and several of our much-amused neighbors said the same. The Old Squire, however, would express no opinion further than to remark that it might do very well for lazy folks.

Our chief difficulty was with the team in the field. Either the dreadful noise it made or else the unfamiliar drag which it set up at the rear end of the cart discomfited the horses amazingly; and even the oxen

showed similar signs of alarm and dislike. Moreover, it taxed the team somewhat heavily, for I suppose that the contrivance must have weighed at least fifteen hundred pounds.

Otherwise it worked pretty well — after a clumsy fashion. We could get a load in about ten minutes with it, and we used it for as many as thirty loads that summer.

Then a little later, in grain harvest, we tried it one afternoon for a load of oats in the south field, near which were growing three acres of corn.

We had the oxen that day. Halstead was driving them. He always said afterward that there was a wasps' nest under the windrow of oats, but he was not a wholly careful driver. Whether it was from wasps, or the noise of the howler, was never very clear. The oxen started suddenly to run, escaped from Halstead's control, and rushed down the slope of the oat-field into the corn.

I never heard such a noise! It was a rumble and a groan combined, and when the howler struck into the green corn, it took the corn up by the roots, and loaded a stream of it, dirt and all, on top of the oats in the rack.

Addison, who was on the cart, jumped down, and we all three ran through the corn, trying to head the oxen off and stop them; but they had too much the start of us. They ran the whole width of the corn-field, and never stopped till they brought up with a crash against the stone wall on the lower side of the south field.

It proved a bad wreck. Not only was the hay-rack smashed, but on reaching the team, we found the nigh ox badly injured, so much so that he was not of much use again until spring. The howler, indeed, was about the only thing which had not suffered; that loomed up as tall as ever.

There were visitors at the farmhouse that day; but

even indoors the Old Squire had heard the terrific noise and outcries from the south field. He came hastening out, and when he saw that broad lane of devastation through his corn, and found what had happened to the cart and to poor old Bright, he gave a glance at the lofty howler, then turned sharply on Addison.

"I never want to see that Juggernaut in my field again!" he exclaimed. "Bear that in mind."

That evening we hauled it from the field and stood it up behind the north barn, as much out of the old gentleman's sight as possible. It stood there for several years, and was never used again.

Yet I now imagine that, with a little more appreciation and encouragement, Addison might have patented his device and made a successful invention of it. So far as I can learn, it was the first hay-loader in the United States.

CHAPTER XXI

AT THE HAY-MEADOWS

AFTERWARDS I think that the Old Squire regretted his sharpness with Addison in the matter of the hay-loader. For only a few mornings later he made us a very generous offer in the way of helping us on to earn money for school expenses.

"We shall need quite a good deal of hay at the lumber camps this coming winter," said he. "It is hard saying, too, how the lumber market is going to be next season, and I cannot safely promise much in advance. But hay we must have for the teams and I engage to pay you seventeen dollars a ton for all you will cut and stack, up at the hay-meadows."

Thereupon we pricked up our ears hopefully; and it was in consequence of this offer that two days later we all set off in a boat up Lurvey's Stream, for the meadows, with a full haying outfit of scythes, rakes, forks and a grindstone.

In fact the market for spruce lumber was just then fitful; but far up in the "great woods" lay the hay meadows which the Old Squire had controlled for twenty years.

The hay was needed; and I suppose that he deemed it best to throw us on our own resources at the outset, and find out if we really desired an education enough to work for it.

Theodora and Ellen were quite as much interested in this haymaking venture as were Addison, Halstead and myself. As they were to share with us in the profits, they bore their full share in the necessary

labor — cooking the food, getting our meals, and "keeping house" for us at the camp near the head of the meadows.

Lurvey's Stream is a small and, in this portion of its course, not a rapid river. We had to pole our boat seventeen miles, and in consequence did not reach the scene of our coming labors till afternoon.

It was the first time I had ever seen the place, although Addison and Halstead had been there the year before.

In truth, these meadows were then a veritable wild paradise; moreover there was that in the dark aspect of the pointed firs and the enclosing mountains which filled me with awe. It was all much as nature made it, a tract of natural grass-land, extending for six or seven miles along the stream, sometimes in plats of several acres together at the broad crooks and bends of the river, or notched irregularly back into the fir woods on both sides. There were scores of these curiously linked little openings, half-isolated one from another by rings and belts of choke-cherry, mountain-ash, moose-maple, willow and alder.

Through it all wound the stream, its course marked by a few water-maples and elms, where herons built their nests, and a profusion of high-bush cranberry.

On the north and west rose the dark-wooded Boundary mountains. In some of the wetter places grew rank green clumps of Indian poke around sloughs where stood numerous muskrat houses; but most of the meadow was firm land which could be "hayed" over with scythe and rake. One season fifteen years before, the Old Squire had obtained hay enough here to supply the ox-teams at four logging-camps on the stream below. At that time, too, efforts were made to seed these bottoms with "foul meadow," bluejoint and even redtop, with some degree of success.

On the west bank of the stream, near the falls at the head of the meadows, where the spruce woods began,

stood a lumber-camp, consisting of two quaint structures, the "man camp" and the "ox camp," built of logs and roofed with riven splits. The man camp was our home during this haying venture. It was forty feet long by eighteen in width, and contained not only bunks, but a large old stove, very useful for cooking.

That afternoon the girls had us divide the camp midway its length into two rooms, by putting up a partition made of the splits from the roof of the ox camp. This done, they began their labors as housekeepers. In fair weather we took our meals at a table, made also of splits, just outside the camp door, in the shadow of a large gnarled yellow-birch which grew by a rock on the very bank of the stream a few rods below the falls.

We had brown doughnuts and cheese, pies, great pots of baked beans and brown bread, and in the morning popovers, Jersey butter, crisp bacon and delicious coffee, to say nothing of broad, thin "wheels" of "salt-rising" bread and great round yellow pones of johnny-cake.

Close by the birch, a little nearer the water, we set up our grindstone, and a few hundred yards lower down on the meadow, where bluejoint grew to the mower's waist, our first haymaking operations began and our first stacks were built.

It is almost needless to say that we soon became aware that haymaking at the meadows was hard work, far harder than on a well-equipped farm. For we not only had the thick, heavy grass to mow, spread and rake, but we had to carry all the hay together on haypoles.

Building the stack, too, was no light task. A large pole, twenty feet in length, had first to be cut in the woods, brought to the spot and set firmly in the ground. A circular "bed" had then to be constructed round the base of the pole to keep the hay up from the damp ground. These beds were formed by setting

crotched stakes two feet high in the earth, and laying cross poles and fir boughs on them.

Much depends on the way the hay is "laid," however. Beginning at the bottom, it must be piled slanting outward, in order that the "weather" may not get into it. Our rule was to lay each stack twelve feet in diameter on the bed, and gradually increase this diameter to fourteen feet at a height of about eight feet from the ground, then gradually draw it inward to the apex, where it was "bound in" to the pole with a withe, and a "weather cape" of rushes or fir boughs tied on to keep water from running in at the top. After it was laid and bound in, each stack was "dressed," or raked down, so as to make the sides shed water. Such is a properly constructed "bottle" stack. Addison had learned the art of stacking — for it is an art — under the Old Squire's own eye the year before.

In truth, the work proved unexpectedly hard.

During the first three forenoons Addison and Halstead mowed, while I spread out the swaths to dry, with a fork. In the afternoon we raked up the hay and stacked it.

From a ton to a ton and a half of hay was put in a stack, and we placed the stacks with a view to carrying the hay as short a distance as possible. For carrying the hay was very toilsome. First, two long hay-poles were laid parallel on the ground, two feet apart, and about two hundred pounds of hay loaded on them. One boy then went in front of the load, another behind, standing each between the two ends of the poles.

"Now!" said the boy in front; and both ends of the poles were raised at once. Then began the march to the stack. One can get very tired carrying three tons of hay that way.

The weather favored us that week; it was fair and not uncomfortably hot. But Halstead complained bitterly of the hard work, and I have doubts as to the

result if Addison had not hired three French boys whom we espied, one afternoon, fishing in the stream. They had come down through the woods from Megantic, just over the Boundary.

These boys were wild-looking fellows, who wore fur caps. They could not speak English, and were very bashful with the girls at the camp; but they knew how to "hay," and by means of signs Addison struck a bargain with them to help us at a dollar a day and board. I must say of those French boys that they were the best boys to work whom I have ever seen — on either side of the Boundary. We kept them mowing steadily, and we did the stacking.

On Friday afternoon Addison went home in the *bateau* to get more food and money to pay our new help. For those French youngsters ate as resolutely as they worked.

During the first year or two at the old farm we had each laid by a little fund of our spare cash at the village savings-bank. The Old Squire constantly encouraged us to do so. "Have something in your own names," he used to say. "It gives one self-respect. It will make you better citizens."

Addison had, I remember, forty-seven dollars in the bank at this time, Theodora eighteen and Ellen sixteen, but I had been able to accumulate only eleven.

That Friday morning we talked the matter over very earnestly in camp. So strong was Addison's faith in this haying venture that he had determined to draw out his own deposit to pay for help, and he also induced Theodora, Ellen and myself to write and sign orders on bits of paper, to the bank, which would enable him to draw what we each had on deposit. We were thus putting our all into the enterprise, even though that "all" was not large.

While he was at home Addison also took in, as partners, Thomas Edwards and his sister, Catherine, who would help Theodora and Ellen.

Addison did not return with the money and food supplies until the following Monday morning; and meanwhile we had been reduced to a diet largely of fish and high-bush cranberries.

After this we went on haying for a week, and put up twenty-six stacks, estimated at forty tons. So far from exhausting the grass of the meadows, I may say without exaggeration that we might have put up three times as much.

But our money for hiring help was exhausted.

We therefore finished our haying and returned home, leaving the stacks to stand in the meadows until winter, when the hay could be drawn to the lumber-camps. There would be, Addison estimated, nearly six hundred dollars' worth — to gain which we had invested our savings to the amount of ninety-two dollars, in addition to our labor and food supplies from home, which, however, the Old Squire never charged up against us. It looked like a fine stroke of business, with profits sufficient to pay expenses for the first term at the academy, with a surplus.

But danger impended — danger which we had not anticipated. Our stacks were soon in peril.

August had been unusually dry that year, and the first half of September proved drier still. During the following week the sky grew very smoky; there were forest fires up in the great woods, and we noticed that the Old Squire cast uneasy looks in that direction. He was thinking of his logging-camps.

On the day following the county fair the old gentleman was at the fair-grounds on prize-committee business; and he had Ellen and myself go with him to help pack up our fruit and dairy exhibits. Thomas Edwards and Catherine were also there. But Addison and Halstead remained at home, to finish digging a field of potatoes. Theodora was also at home, assisting Gram.

At about three o'clock that afternoon the boys, as

they plied their hoes, saw a rheumatic old trapper and hunter named Hewey Glinds, who lived up at the borders of the great woods, hobbling across the fields toward them.

"What do you suppose old Hewey wants of us?" said Halstead.

They were not left long in doubt.

"Thar's a big fire ragin' up in the woods!" he hailed. "It's workin' down onto them hay-medders. You're goin' to lose them stacks o' yourn, sure's you're born!"

They dropped their hoes. "We must go up there!" exclaimed Addison.

"Wal, ye can't go too quick!" cried old Hewey. "And you'd better take a scythe and ax along," he added, "and a couple o' buckets and a hoe and shovel. Ef I wa'n't so pesky lame, I'd go with ye."

The boys left everything, ran to the house, got tools, and hitched old Sol into the buckboard; for the water was now too low in the stream to go in the *bateau,* and they had to take the winter trail. Addison ran into the house to get food to carry, and to tell Theodora where and why they were going. Somewhat to his annoyance, at first, Theodora wanted to go with them.

"Oh, no, Doad, you had better not," he said.

"I'm sure I can help!" she cried. "I can put on that glazed cap of yours and my old rubber waterproof." Indeed, she insisted on going, and came out all ready as the boys drove through the yard. So all three set off together, and put Sol at his best pace.

The winter trail was far from being a smooth road, however, and Sol was by no means speedy. It was long past six when they reached the camp at the head of the meadows. The early September dusk was falling; but to their great relief, no fire was in sight, and there appeared to be no immediate danger. Yet the

wind blew in fitful gusts from the west, and a vast amount of smoke that smelled strongly of burning spruce and pine was drifting over the meadows. As it grew dark, too, the sky over the forest, all round to the westward, was lighted by an ominous red glare.

This and the great amount of smoke rendered them very uneasy. There was not much that could be done in the night, however. Theodora got supper at the camp, and they watched till as late as ten or eleven o'clock. Then, as no fire was very near, Addison urged Theodora to catch a nap. "I will call you if there is any need of it," he said to her.

She accordingly retired to the little apartment which Ellen and she had contrived for themselves while we were haying. The two boys appear also to have fallen asleep not long after in the bunk of the living-room, and slept soundly.

Addison was the first to wake and go out. It was already light. A sense of danger oppressed him, for he had become aware of a far-borne, roaring sound, with which blended low, distant crashes, as of falling trees. The smoke was much thicker than on the evening before. It made his eyes smart. Vast white columns of it were rolling skyward over the woods. Flakes of white ashes were fluttering down. Across the stream he saw two otters loping along the bank, and heard robins crying in a disturbed manner.

"Halse!" he exclaimed, running back indoors. "The fire is close on us! Get up and help wet down the stacks!"

Halstead started up from sleep with an odd cry. He seemed dazed, and stared wildly about him; then dashing out, he crossed the stream and ran into the open meadow to look round. After a single glance he came rushing back. Addison noticed that he was pale.

"We never can fight it alone!" he cried. "The woods are all afire! I'm going for help!"

"No, no!" said Addison. "You must stay right here and help me wet down the stacks!"

But Halstead was quite wild, either from sudden fear for himself or some erratic notion of what he ought to do. Before Addison could remonstrate with him he ran to the ox camp, untied old Sol and jumped on his back. Addison rushed after him, shouting, "Stop! Come back, Halse, and help me wet down the stacks!" Theodora, too, who had now emerged from the camp, called to him several times.

"We need a big crew!" was all the reply Halse made; and at last Addison stopped chasing him, for he had put Sol at a gallop down the trail and was soon out of sight.

With another wrathful glance after him, Addison, in turn, ran out into the open meadow to see for himself the progress of the fire. Theodora, equally astonished and bewildered by Halstead's unexpected behavior, came hastening after. At a distance of less than half a mile the entire forest, all round to the west and northwest of the meadows, was on fire. Magnificent in the still faint dawnlight, ruddy pillars of flame were climbing to the very tops of the firs. Immense writhing columns of yellowish and white vapor rolled upward into the sky.

For the moment awe fell on them both, awe and the instinct to escape.

With Addison, however, it was the instinct of an instant only. Thoughts of our haystacks and a determination to save them roused his courage. "If only Halse had taken the buckboard and you with him, Doad, I wouldn't have cared!" he exclaimed.

"But I wouldn't have gone!" cried Theodora, indignantly. "I will help you, Ad. I would stay and help if I burned up!"

"Come on, then!" shouted Addison.

Together they sped back to the camp, where the tools were still on the buckboard. First Addison hung the scythe in the snath, then got the buckets.

"Fetch the rake and hoe, Doad!" he exclaimed, and ran down the meadow on the west side of the stream, to where the nearest of the stacks stood. While he mowed swaths round them, Theodora hastily raked the dry grass away, clearing a little space round each one, so that the fire, when it came to run in the grass, might not so readily reach them.

Addison was strong and quick; he worked fast; within fifteen minutes they had cleared the grass from round the base of the eleven stacks to the west of the stream. Addison then caught up the hoe and dug a little ditch across the westward side of each in the soft black loam.

But already the firs all along the border of the meadow on that side were ablaze, with a tremendous crackling and roar. Fortunately, the wind blew but fitfully as yet. The chief danger was from blazing cinders and sparks whirled upward with the smoke.

The rush "cape" on top of one stack suddenly began to blaze; but seizing a bucket, Addison dashed water over it from the stream. Theodora brought another bucketful. They put the blaze out, then wet down all eleven of the stacks, running to and from the stream, bringing more than fifty bucketfuls within ten minutes — all this in a rain of ashes, amidst smoke so thick that they panted as they worked. The roar of the conflagration, too, nearly drowned their voices.

For a few minutes it looked as if they might succeed; but glancing across the stream, Addison saw, to his consternation, that one of the stacks on the east side was blazing; also that sparks had set the dry grass over there on fire in several places.

"Doad, it's getting the start of us!" he cried. "Come on, quick!"

He splashed through the stream, dipping up a bucketful, and then ran to the stack and put out the blaze. Theodora followed him, filling her own bucket, and they wet the stack down. But even as they did so another stack began to smoke — and there were fifteen stacks on that side!

Then began a desperate struggle against what seemed hopeless odds. There was now no time to mow round all these stacks or dig trenches. With a few hasty slashes of his knife, Addison cut bunches of green alder bushes by the stream.

"Take these, Doad, and whip out the little fires in the grass as fast as they catch!" he exclaimed. "Keep them from running to the stacks."

This for a time she succeeded in doing, darting this way and that, up and down the meadow. Addison, meanwhile, had snatched up the buckets again, and filling them, rushed to the burning stack, the whole top of which was now afire. He quenched it, however, partly with water, partly by whipping out the blaze.

But by this time still another at a distance was smoking. They had to run fast to save that one; there was no rest even to take breath. Fires in the grass were starting on all sides. Flying sparks scorched their faces and burned dozens of little holes in their clothes. Time and again they had to throw water on each other.

It was little wonder, indeed, that such frantic exertion proved too much for a girl. While running with her bucket of water, Theodora was suddenly overcome, either by the smoke or heat. Turning to take the bucket from her, Addison saw that she had sat down in the grass, very pale, panting for breath.

Self-reproach smote him. "Doad!" he exclaimed, helping her to her feet. "Go up on this side of the stream to the falls and sit down there beside that big rock by the water. The fire will not get to you there,

for there's sand and gravel all round. Sit there till you are rested. Don't come down here again!"

"But, Ad, I want to help!" she still urged.

"Go!" he exclaimed. "Don't bother!" And very reluctantly Theodora left him there.

While this was happening two more stacks had taken fire, and one of them burned in spite of all Addison could do with bucket and bushes.

While rushing with his buckets to a bend of the stream, he saw the alders on the other side part, and a large bear that the fire had driven from the woods plumped into the water up to its neck, and stood there, wheezing for breath. Addison did not stop for bears, however; he got more than fifty bucketfuls from the same pool where the animal stood. Deer, too, were bounding across the meadow, and a cow moose and calf went galloping by.

His clothes repeatedly took fire as he whipped the blazing grass, and to keep from blazing himself he jumped into the water time and again, then, all dripping, sprang out and rushed to the fight again. He simply would not give up, but fought on with grim determination, regardless of the outlook or of the passage of time.

He had now wet down all the stacks on the east side of the stream; but by this time one of those already wet on the west side was afire! Then began the worst, most disheartening part of the struggle; for by this time the dry grass was afire all over the meadows, as well as the fir woods on both sides. The smoke and heat were well-nigh unbearable. It was only by plunging into the stream repeatedly that he was able to endure it and go on.

Addison had succeeded in putting out the burning stack on the west side, and once more drenched the entire eleven over there. But the heat and smoke rapidly dried them; he found that he must keep wetting them, going from one to another as fast as he

could run. Before he was aware — there were so many of them partly hidden from view by trees and bushes — another down the stream on the east side was ablaze past quenching. After this he ran from one to another of the stacks, dashing water on them, six or eight bucketfuls apiece, and kept them all dripping wet.

Toward noon the conflagration seemed to abate a little, and hopes of winning encouraged Addison. The sky had darkened. Through the smoke, clouds could be seen gathering, but immediately gusts of wind, from a shower passing a mile to the northward, sent sparks and flame eddying across the meadows again; and before he could run with water and his alder brush three stacks were afire, one of which burned despite his efforts.

Wind eddies now seemed to come first from one quarter, then from another; and for two hours Addison was constantly running up and down, quenching new outbursts of the fire. Then came a smart shower, which rendered the danger less imminent, and gave him a moment's respite.

All the time anxiety concerning Theodora disturbed him. When the shower began, he started to find her; but to his great relief he met her bringing a pot of coffee in one hand and a pie in the other. Nor had she been all this time making coffee. Theodora, indeed, had been fighting fire on her own account, and almost as successfully as Addison himself.

After resting by the great rock in the cool of the falls for a few minutes, she had felt much better, and had started to go back down the meadows; but the fire was now burning all round the little clearing in which the lumber-camp stood.

Suddenly she perceived that the roof of the ox camp was smoking. In fact, it was ablaze before she could do anything to put it out, for at first she could find nothing with which to carry or throw water. At last

she snatched a kettle off the camp stove, and used it as a bucket.

The ox camp burned in spite of Theodora's best efforts, however, and the blazing cinders from it and the burning woods would certainly have set the roof of the man camp on fire if she had not thrown water smartly for an hour or more, wetting down both roof and walls repeatedly.

While Addison was saving the stacks, Theodora saved the camp, with all we had in it. And that old camp — afterward well known as Boundary Camp — was yet to be the scene of several remarkable adventures.

Meanwhile, down at the farm that morning, we had been uncertain what to do, not knowing the extent of the fire, and deeming it possible that Addison and Halstead together might be able to look out for the hay. We had got home from the fair, with our stock and other exhibits, late the evening before, and were not astir very early. In fact, we were at the breakfast-table, between eight and nine, when Halstead, the panic-stricken, came home, running old Sol and looking very wild indeed.

On the way down, his imagination appeared to have run away with him completely. His first words to us as we rushed out were, "The meadows are all afire! The stacks are all burnt up!"

"But where are Addison and Theodora?" the Old Squire exclaimed. "Why did you leave them?"

"I came for help!" cried Halstead, in a strange, high-pitched voice. "It needs a big crew! We must raise a crew and go back!" He was nearly in tears.

"Did you leave Addison and Theodora in the camp?" the Old Squire questioned him.

"Yes!" cried Halstead, vaguely. "But it is all burnt up before this time! The fire was close by! 'Twas the awfullest sight I ever saw!"

This, of course, was very alarming — if true. The

Old Squire called in our two hired men from the field, and sent me off in haste to summon Mr. Edwards and his son Thomas; and as soon as they came, two of the farm horses were hitched into a double-seated market-wagon and we set off up the trail.

Halstead was so excited and upset that the Old Squire told him he need not go back.

The day proved very hot for September, and all the way up through the great woods the air was so full of smoke that our eyes smarted from it. Driving as fast as possible, however, we were unable to reach the meadows till after four o'clock — in the midst of that shower.

It was a strange sight. Stumps, logs and fallen trees were still burning on all sides, and the entire stretch of meadow-land, where the fire had consumed the dry grass, was now smoking and steaming in the rain.

The horses kept snorting, and they were very loath to go past the worst of the fires, but we urged them on. In truth, we were in great anxiety. It was plain that a mighty conflagration had been raging there. And what had become of Addison and Theodora?

At last we came in sight of the camp, and to our great relief perceived that it was still standing, unconsumed. What we saw there as we drove up was Addison, sitting on the "deacons' seat" near the door, eating a crust of pie, and Theodora just emerging from the door with a dishful of hot oatmeal porridge!

But at first glance we hardly knew either of them, they were so muddy, singed and blackened, Addison in particular. His clothing was sodden, caked with dry mud and burned full of holes, as was his hat. His eyes were red-ringed, his hands blistered, his boots burned and crumpled yellow. In truth, he was the worst-looking boy I ever saw!

But he grinned through his grime when he saw us drive up. For the fight was won — a wonderful fight,

too, for a boy, eighteen. He had saved five hundred dollars' worth of hay.

The Old Squire got out, and going down the meadows among the stacks, ran an experienced eye over the mute evidences of the struggle that had gone on there, then came back to camp.

"Addison," said he, "you're a man, every inch a man!" and gave him a hearty handshake.

We never said much about this to Halstead afterward. Not every boy inherits a good head for emergencies.

CHAPTER XXII

ADDISON WHEELS A ROAD-MEASURER

THE week after our return from making hay at the meadows, Addison received an unusual offer, and was led to undertake a very odd sort of job — nothing less than to wheel a machine, called a road-measurer, over the roads of the entire county. The machine was automatic in its action and somewhat resembled a wheelbarrow. The wheel was much larger, however, being about four feet in diameter and of lighter build; the two "arms" by means of which it was wheeled about, were also lighter than those of a wheelbarrow.

Connected with the axle there was a little box with a glass lid, and on the other side of the wheel another larger box with a cover and padlock. The whole contrivance would hardly have weighed more than thirty pounds, and to wheel it was mere child's play.

A lawyer and an editor invented it — Lawyer Huntley at the village, six miles from the Old Squire's farm, and Editor Rastwell of the *Pine State Gazette*. Times were a little dull that season for both of them; it was an off year, politically. So they took thought in a public-spirited way and hatched a scheme for getting up a county map and real-estate atlas, the idea being that all the well-to-do people thereabouts would buy a copy, at six dollars.

But to draft their map accurately, they needed more exact measurements than were then in hand, as to the principal highways of the county. They therefore set their wits to work and invented this "road-measurer," as they called it. It was a sort of cyclometer.

It would have saved much slow footing it about if they had attached their distance-recording gear to the axle of a light road wagon; but perhaps they did not think of that. Their road-measurer had to be wheeled like a wheelbarrow by a person on foot, who made notes of the distances and the relative location of the farmhouses and other property — plotting the map roughly as he went on. To do this required very careful attention to the task, also a good eye and fidelity to the object in view. Neither the lawyer nor the editor had any great liking for such painstaking details, or for so much long, hard walking. What they wanted was a young man on whose accuracy they could rely and whom they could trust to do the right thing; and after casting about, they came up to the Old Squire's one evening and offered the job to Addison.

Mr. Huntley introduced the subject of the map, and finally offered Addison a one-fourth interest in the prospective profits if he would do the necessary work with the road-measurer.

We had finished our haying and Addison could be spared. Moreover, this was the kind of thing that always suited him pretty well. But he was a cautious boy. He thought over Huntley's proposition for an hour or more, figured up some four hundred miles of road to be measured, then got the Old Squire's advice, and offered to do what they wanted for the quarter-interest as proposed, and a dollar and a half a day additional.

The lawyer declared this to be impossible, and he and the editor went away, taking their invention with them, but returned two days later, and after some further discussion, they came to an agreement, Addison reducing his cash demand to a dollar and a quarter a day.

Addison had to bear all his own expenses while travelling; but he hoped to clear a dollar a day by

taking a basket of cooked food with him from home, and stopping overnight at farmhouses, where in those days the charge for lodging was but trifling. The road-measurer, with all that appertained to it, was entrusted to him; and the next morning we all turned out betimes to see him start off with it.

It was August, and as hot days were to be looked for, Addison put on an old cork helmet, which contributed to the outlandish aspect of the entire rig. We all laughed, I remember, when he picked up the "arms" of the road-measurer and walked off — the big front wheel turning lazily and that droll little clicking noise muttering to itself inside the box on the axle.

And if the contrivance looked queer to us, who knew about it, it was ten times more an object of curiosity to strangers whom Addison met on the highway.

This, indeed, was a phase of his new job which Addison had not reckoned on — the curiosity of the public.

Everybody whom he met stared first at him, next at the road-measurer; and then it was, "Say, you, what d'ye call that machine?" or, "Hello, young fellow, where you going with that queer wheelbarrow?"

On account of his two boxes and the basket of food, some took him for a pedler, and pulled up to ask what he had to sell.

At first this merely amused Addison. He stopped and explained it all at length to them. By the time he had done so half a dozen times, however, it began to grow monotonous. He soon found, too, that so many delays would prevent his making satisfactory progress. Boys and men, working in the fields, came hastening to the roadside to look the measurer over and ask all about it. At nearly every house he passed, people appeared at the doors or windows.

He grew weary of answering the same questions

over and over. "Can't stop! Can't stop!" he exclaimed. "I'm in a hurry!"

"Sho!" "Do tell!" "You don't say!" retorted the curious ones; and a muscular youth whom Addison advised to attend to his own affairs offered to give him a lesson in politeness.

"Can't you answer a civil question?" said he. "Tell me to mind my business again and I'll smash that jig-a-maroon for you!"

Addison took second thought, and to the next person — an old farmer with a skittish mare — who pulled up to inquire, he cried, "This is a jig-a-maroon! I'm grinding coffee with it! Don't stop me!"

The farmer's grin vanished in a scowl. "By gum!" said he, and grabbed for his whip. "I dastn't leave my mare unhitched, or I'd dust your jacket for ye!" Evidently public curiosity has rights, or thinks it has, and that the pursuit of knowledge by asking questions is one of them.

Three old maids, going blueberrying with a wagonful of tin pails, were the next team he met; and to them Addison imparted the information jocosely that he was walking with that wheel for the sake of his health.

"You don't look very sick!" one of them remarked, tartly. "I guess all you need is a dose of good manners."

Addison began to think so himself. He took thought again, and on meeting an elderly couple a little farther on, stopped when they stopped, and putting on a sad look, pointed with his finger to his ears, then to his mouth, and hastened on.

"Poor fellow!" he heard the woman say. "He's deaf and dumb. I suppose he is some kind of a colporteur."

That worked so well that he determined to go on pretending he was a deaf-mute. A few minutes later a double wagon, with a merry party of young people,

came along, who promptly plied him with questions.

Again he pointed to his ears and shook his head, but had hardly got past when one young rogue let out so piercing a yell that Addison started in spite of himself and glanced back. Whereupon a shout of laughter rose behind; and jumping out, the boys of the party began pelting him with whatever came handiest. He was obliged to ply his legs and set the road-measurer in rapid motion to escape the clods.

By this time he was thoroughly out of patience. It seemed to him outrageous that a person could not go along a public highway, attending strictly to his own business, without being subjected to such vexatious attentions. He grew so angry over it that presently he did a very foolish thing.

He had stopped to make a record and mark the location of a farmhouse, when he noticed a horse and wagon coming on behind him, driven by a large, overgrown boy of very rustic appearance. On the back seat of the wagon were two girls, who looked as if they might be the youngster's sisters. They had been berrying, and had several baskets and pails well filled.

When opposite him they stopped, as Addison expected; but instead of asking the usual old question, all three sat for some moments watching him. At last the boy drawled out:

"What d'ye call that funny-lookin' wheel thing?"

Addison felt that the limit of his patience had been reached. He rose up suddenly, rolling his eyes, brandishing his arms, and advanced on them, shouting:

"Sic transit gloria mundi! Hic, haec, hoc! Mox anguis recreatus! Carthago delenda est!"

But the young berry-pickers did not wait to hear all that. The girls cried out in alarm, the young fellow applied his whip, and on they went, with their old white horse at a run.

"He's crazy! He's crazy!" Addison heard them

exclaim to each other; and in the irritable state of mind into which he had fallen, he deemed this a good joke.

By this time it was six o'clock. He sat down under a large pine by the roadside, ate supper from his basket, then went on for a mile or two, with an eye out for a farmhouse at which to pass the night. According to his record, he was twenty-four miles from home, in the township of Greenboro, where the farms were few and far between, and the farmers in rather poor circumstances.

Coming to a small, new, unpainted house, he wheeled into the yard and knocked at the door.

At last a chamber window was raised, and a woman's voice cried out, "Go away! You go away!"

Stepping back, Addison attempted to explain his need of lodging; but the woman still cried, "Go away!" and he at last did so, wondering what the matter could be, for at that time it did not occur to him that the youthful berry-pickers had given the alarm as they drove on, that a crazy man was coming! He went on for a mile, most of the way through woodlands, before coming to another habitation. By this time it was long past sunset and beginning to grow dusk.

He came to a large brook where there was a sawmill, and beyond the brook a house. He wheeled over the bridge to the house, and then, seeing a light at a shed in the rear, set down the road-measurer and went round to it. The shed was open in front, and on looking in, he saw a wagon with pails of blueberries in it, and at the end of the shed a girl with a lantern. Beside her stood a young fellow in the act of feeding a white horse.

Addison recognized both the horse and the young people — the very ones to whom he had rolled his eyes and declaimed the Latin. His first thought was that he had better go on and say nothing. But he wanted

a night's lodging, and supposed that he could easily explain the joke to them after they had spoken. So he said, "Good evening!" The girl turned and held up the lantern, but had no sooner seen him than she screamed and darted out at the back of the shed; the boy, too, suddenly made himself scarce.

Even then Addison did not suppose it was anything which could not be explained as soon as he had spoken with the older people of the place. In fact, he now began to think it was best to explain. He therefore went back to the house door and knocked. People appeared to be running about indoors. Addison knocked again.

At last the door opened a little way and an old man peeped out.

"Good evening, sir!" Addison said. "Can you put me up here to-night?"

Through the crack of the door the old man warily peered at him in silence.

"None of you need be afraid of me," Addison continued. "I was only joking with your young folks down the road. I am going around with a machine to measure the roads."

That may have sounded sane enough to one who knew about the road-measurer, but it failed to satisfy this old citizen of Greenboro. He still gripped the door.

"Pooty tired, be ye?" he asked.

"Yes," Addison said, smiling.

"Think you could keep pooty still?"

"Oh, yes," Addison said. "I want to go to bed soon. I have had supper."

The old man slowly opened the door.

"You can come in," said he. "I will show you where you can sleep."

Addison followed him in, saying as he did so that he would like to take his road-measurer to his room with him.

"I am very careful of it," he added.

"I s'pose you be," the old man remarked, his face wrinkling in a grin. "I make no doubt you be. Now just you take a look into this room. See if it suits ye."

He opened a door back of the chamber stairs, then stood aside, holding up the candle.

Addison stepped into the room to see what it was like, but had no sooner done so than the door was clapped to behind him. He called out and tried to open the door. It was held fast, and he heard them piling furniture or boxes against it.

By the dim light he saw the outline of a small window at the rear of the room, and rushed to it, stumbling into a bedstead as he did so. But the sash of the window stuck fast; he could not get it up.

Very angry by this time, he now pulled the bedstead apart, and seizing one of the side rails, smashed out a panel of the door.

"Stop! Stop! Keep still in there!" the old man shouted, repeatedly. "Stop that, or we shall have to shoot ye!" And Addison heard some one, the large boy, probably, loading a gun.

With that, Addison, who was generally a prudent youth, concluded that it would be foolish to rush on from bad to worse; in fact, he began to realize that he had been acting foolishly all day, and that this was the natural result of it. In calm tones he now attempted to hail the people through the door; but they were piling a tier of large boxes against it, and paid no attention.

A few moments later he heard them nailing boards over the window — which rendered the room dark as Egypt.

What they might do next, or what he could do to undeceive them, was not very clear. He found a chair, sat down, and thought it all over. Unless he resorted to violence again there was little he could do, and he sat there for a long time.

While stumbling about the room he had stepped on a straw bed in one corner, and he now concluded that he might as well make himself comfortable and let matters take their course. This he did, with the result that he presently fell asleep; for he had been up early that morning, and had had a long, hard day.

Meanwhile these good people, — their name was Simons, — having, as they thought, a crazy man shut up in their house, determined to call on the town authorities.

One of the selectmen of the town, Asaph Kimball by name, lived at a distance of two or three miles; and the boy set off to notify him and get assistance, to take Addison off to an asylum.

The selectman turned out, roused up two neighbors, and reached the place at about half past three o'clock, just as day was dawning.

The noise they made removing the barricade at the door waked Addison. Before he could get up, Kimball and another man rushed in and had him by the collar.

"Now be quiet! Be quiet!" they said to him, soothingly.

"Oh, I am quiet enough," said Addison, laughing. He then told Kimball who he was, what he was doing, and exactly how the mistake had come about; he also showed him the road-measurer and explained its workings.

Yet so firmly had the idea that he was a lunatic taken possession of all their minds that it was fully ten minutes before he could wholly undeceive them.

Kimball burst out laughing at last and let go his collar.

"I guess you are all right," said he. "But you had better not play off any more of your didoes on people."

"You may be sure I shall not!" Addison exclaimed.

He paid for the door panel which he had smashed;

and the episode ended by his taking breakfast with his late jailers.

Addison had had his lesson, and being a shrewd boy, he came to the conclusion that it would be better policy to make public curiosity help advertise the new map than to try to resist it. Before he left the Simons place that morning, he stuck up a placard beside the larger of the two boxes, on which he had printed the words:

THIS IS A ROAD-MEASURER.

And to all who stopped to ask questions he now replied rapidly, but politely:

"I am measuring the roads for a new county map and real-estate atlas. It is going to be a fine thing. An agent will be around to take subscriptions in the course of a few weeks. Only six dollars. Good morning!"

He rehearsed that hundreds of times during the next two weeks, and there was reason to think that it proved a good advertisement. For the map was fairly successful. If I remember aright, Addison's one-fourth interest in it finally netted him seventy dollars.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LINE-STORM

RARELY in the whole history of our country have there been more unpropitious times for young people to obtain a liberal education and pay their own way at school and college, than during those first few years following the Civil War — 1867 to 1872. All values appeared to shrink away. It was very difficult to turn farm products into money, difficult to sell them at any price.

In February, when Master Pierson was with us, we had counted quite confidently on being able to raise money enough by September to begin attending school at the village Academy. At that time, too, the Old Squire appeared to think there would be no obstacle to this, although the outlay for five of us would be considerable, to say nothing of the extra help which would be required on the farm that fall, in place of our work. The old gentleman was making a number of investments, too, in the way of new business ventures.

By August, however, everything in the way of profits began going wrong. Scarcely a dollar could be got in from any source; nor could debts be collected; every one who owed us pleaded poverty.

Yet up to September 20th, we had hoped to pull things around and make a start that fall, missing, perhaps, the first two or three weeks of the Academy term.

Quite a valuable load of farm produce was ready

for market at Portland: a homely, but precious load on the sale of which depended new text-books, clothes, tuition fees, etc. Gram and the girls had been three weeks or more getting it ready to go.

In any ordinary times, indeed, the old farm was generally good for a load of something or other, which could be gathered up and taken to market. Throughout our student days the place was a veritable mine of potential assets, which we often worked for about all it would give up. Sometimes it was lumber, sometimes fruit, butter, poultry and once or twice, as in this present case, veal calves.

Dear old place, how we ransacked it! And the Old Squire and Gram — well, sometimes they winced a little at our rapacity, but usually one would say to the other, "It is to help them get an education, and let's hope it will do some good in after years." So the old farm bore the brunt of it.

This particular load, as I now recall, consisted of three barrels of sliced dried apples, in the preparation of which we had all taken a hand during several very busy evenings; also fifty dozen eggs, carefully packed in five bushels of oats, and three firkins of butter.

There were also fifty cans of preserved green-gage plums. The plum-trees in the south garden had borne a prodigious crop that summer; and under Gram's careful eye, Theodora and Ellen had put up the fruit in glass jars, for which a Portland grocer had promised us twenty-four cents a jar.

If I remember aright, too, there were twenty pairs of knit socks and double mittens, corded up in a sack, also twenty pounds of dried sage and a bag of round coriander seed.

It was to care for these more purely household products that Theodora journeyed with Addison and me on the front seat of the farm wagon.

By far the most bulky and troublesome portion of the load, as also the most valuable part, was eight lusty

veal calves, grizzly Durhams, from four to six weeks old, which had to be transported alive in a strong crate, set at the rear of the wagon — a choice lot of late calves for which we hoped to realize ten dollars apiece.

On account of this young live stock, — to keep them shut up as short a time as possible, — we had planned to set off in the afternoon, pass the first night at the Mansion House on Ricker Hill, and making an early start from there, get into Portland by eleven the following forenoon. This, it was thought, would afford us opportunity to market our load and make our purchases during the afternoon.

The night in Portland, as a matter of course, we would spend at the house of Uncle Lucas Bushnell, whose family often visited us.

From Uncle Lucas's, by starting early again and driving late in the afternoon, we could return home in a day. That, in fact, was the usual program on trips from the old farm to Portland, the distance being about sixty miles.

Everything was ready and the calves were well fed for their journey at noon of September 19th.

Sol and Nep were hitched up for a start at three o'clock; but the Old Squire had come out and stood casting his "weather eye" round. It was not cloudy exactly, but here was a whitish haze high up in the sky; two bright sun-dogs had also appeared, one on each side of the sun, in the southwest.

"Better not start to-day," the old gentleman said to us. "There's a storm coming.

"To-morrow will be the 20th of September, you know," he continued, with another glance at the sky. "Sun crosses the line to-morrow. It is about time for the line-storm. I'm afraid if you start off for Portland that you will get caught out in it."

All our plans, however, had been laid. The term at the Academy had already begun, and we greatly

desired to buy our books, clothing, etc., and get ready.

"Oh, we can rig up warm and take the big umbrella!" Addison exclaimed.

"But your load," the Old Squire reminded us, "your dried apples and your sage?" Then finding that we were bent on going, he brought a tarpaulin from the wagon-house chamber to cover over all, in case of rain. And so, despite sun-dogs and other omens, we set off, reached Ricker's tavern at seven that evening, and passed the night there.

Hiram Ricker, senior, of Poland water fame, and proprietor of the Poland Spring House, had been a boyhood friend of the Old Squire. His family made us welcome; and we were called at five the next morning for an early start — but, oh, how it rained!

A driving northeast storm had set in during the night. Dark, raw and cold it looked; and how the gusts of rain poured against the tavern windows! They had a fire in the large fireplace, and Mr. Ricker stood before it, rubbing his hands, when Addison and I came down-stairs.

"This is the line-storm," said he. "I thought it was coming yesterday, when I saw those sun-dogs. You had better stay right here with us to-day. I can give you some milk from my barns for the calves. It's too bad weather for you to be out."

It would have been much better if we had heeded this prudent advice, but thoughts of the Academy urged us to make a start. Theodora, too, was quite as plucky about it as Addison and myself. We covered the load with the tarpaulin, lashed it fast, and then, as soon as the horses were fed and breakfast was eaten, we put on our thick coats, and with the umbrella held low, set off to drive the twenty-five miles to Portland.

But it blew and poured and the calves bleated. The horses seemed unable to make haste, and moped on

dejectedly through the mud. Addison drove. We put Theodora in the middle, held the big umbrella as close as we could, and made the best of it.

"It's only a rain-storm!" Theodora exclaimed, hopefully. "Maybe it will slacken by the time we get to Portland. We can get nice and dry at Uncle Lucas's. How Aunt Barbara will stare when she sees us turn up in such a storm!

"But really, boys, we mustn't take these calves there!" Theodora added, laughing heartily. "It would scandalize the whole street — and Aunt Barbara and Cousin Sylvia are quite fashionable, you know. It would mortify them terribly to have their country relations appear at their door with a load of bleating calves!"

But we were by no means at Portland yet. By nine o'clock we had only passed New Gloucester and entered the wooded tract of country beyond. Thus far we had met scarcely a team on the road, but now we passed a man in a booted buggy, driving fast and splashed with mud, whom we guessed to be a physician, summoned in haste.

The road was rather narrow just there. His horse turned in too suddenly in the rear of our long wagon, and his hind wheels clicked sharply against ours. I looked back to learn if damage had been done, and saw that the buggy had pulled up and that the man had his head out at one side of it. He shouted something indistinctly, and motioned with his hand toward our wagon. We imagined, however, that he was angry because we had not turned out farther, and so drove on.

But a moment later we felt an odd kind of jolt at the rear end of the wagon, then another and another; and looking hastily back, I saw that the calves were jumping out of the crate behind and running off into the woods, with their tails in the air.

"Hold up, Ad!" I shouted. "Stop, quick! There

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go all those calves! That crate door's come unhasped!"

Addison pulled up short. "Here, Doad, hold the horses!" he cried, and flung the reins to her. We then both jumped out in the rain and ran back.

But two more of the calves, five in all, had made their escape before we could reach the rear of the wagon and close the crate door. Three of them had run off on the west side of the road and two on the other — through drenching wet bushes, tall weeds and dripping goldenrod.

"O bother!" Addison exclaimed. "Here's a pretty go! In this awful rain, too! But we've got to catch them!"

There was no help for it; we seized each a halter from under the wagon-seat, and bidding Theodora mind the horses, we dashed off through the wet bushes to recapture those fleeing calves.

Addison followed the two that had run off on the right side of the road, and I the others on the other side.

How those little torments ran! I suppose they were homesick. They coursed away like deer. We were soaked to our skins before we had followed them three minutes through the wet weeds and bushes.

Fortunately they kept bleating as they ran, — at least, those which I was chasing did so, — and knowing that they must be recaptured at any cost, I ran on, and finally came up with my three at a fence, bordering the woodland on that side.

They could run no farther in that direction; and here, after not a little coaxing and calling, I threw my halter about the neck of one of them, and then started to drag him back to the wagon.

Any one who has ever attempted to lead a vigorous calf which resists at every step can easily surmise what a task this proved through half a mile of bushy woodland, with the rain coming down in sheets.

At last I reached the road and the wagon, where Theodora sat waiting patiently. Addison had not returned, and a new difficulty now beset me. I could not tend the crate door and put the calf back into it alone, he was so heavy and strong.

Like the helpful cousin she always proved, Theodora got down in the mud and rain, and insisted on adding her own strength to mine. We tied the recalcitrant little brute's legs, and then, between us, hoisted him into the crate and made the door fast.

I then set off again, found the two others still bleating at the fence, and after another tussle, secured them, one at one end of the halter, the other at the other. But the troubles I had getting the two back to the wagon at once were ten times worse than those of the first trip. The little rascals seemed possessed to run in opposite directions; and as often as we came to a tree, one was sure to run to one side of it, the other to the other.

The only redeeming feature was that the violent exertion kept me warm in my wet clothes. I must have been two hours getting those calves back to the road.

Theodora, indeed, had grown uneasy for my safety, but she was even more concerned about Addison; for nothing had been seen or heard from him since he first set off in the woods on the east side of the road.

"I am really afraid he is lost," Theodora said to me, as she again got down to help put the last two calves in the crate.

I thought it more likely, however, that on this side the calves had come to no fences which restrained their vagrant flight, and had run off to a great distance.

It seemed useless to follow after him. I got into the wagon again under the umbrella, and we waited for a long time, the horses standing there disconsolately in the driving rain; for it was now pouring harder

than ever, if that were possible. Not a soul was stirring on the highway.

I should think we sat there for fully two hours, till long past noon, certainly, but no Addison appeared.

Theodora then said that we must try to find him; but after my experience in the wet underbrush, I was by no means desirous of entering the dripping woods again. Snug as we sat under the umbrella, I was now shivering with cold; wet clothes on a raw, stormy day are very depressing to one's courage.

The prospect of reaching Portland that day had now grown dim, indeed; and the six hungry calves in the crate were making the woodland reëcho to their loud complaints of man's injustice.

"Oh, why doesn't Addison come?" Theodora sighed, occasionally. "Something surely has happened to him."

"No," I argued. "He has had to chase those calves for miles, and is having no end of trouble, catching them and leading them back. He wouldn't come back without them, you know, if it took him all day. Ad is that kind of a fellow."

We sat there for at least an hour longer, watching and listening for some sign or sound of his return. Theodora then began very quietly to get down from the wagon.

"You are wet and cold," she said. "Hold the horses. I am going to see if I can find him."

Of course no boy born in America would sit still and see a girl start off under such circumstances as those. I jumped down and set off as fast as I could through the woodland in the direction in which I had seen Addison disappear. Immediately I came to swampy ground and a brook, but crossed the latter and ran on for about a mile. I soon became drenched again, but grew warm from the exercise.

At last I came to partially open land, and hastening on for some distance farther among witch-hazel

clumps and young pines, sighted an old weathered barn, and near it a low, even more dilapidated house, the windows and doors of which had been removed — evidently a deserted farm.

On coming into plainer view of it, however, I noticed that smoke was rising from the squat old chimney.

Here, at last, was some one of whom I could inquire, I thought; perhaps Addison himself might be there; and I hastened forward, moving round through the thick pines toward the front side of the barn.

I had approached within a few rods, when very distinctly I heard a coarse imprecation, followed by a loud laugh and the words:

"Mut has cut his fingers!"

The oath, the tones, caused me to pull up short, then go forward more cautiously, keeping out of sight among the little pines. On the front side the great door of the barn was open, and just inside stood four swarthy, rough-looking fellows, engaged in skinning the carcass of a calf, which hung, suspended by the hind legs, to the cross-beam over the door.

From the first instant I felt sure that this was one of our calves; moreover, as they pulled the skin away, I saw that it was a grizzly Durham, just like ours.

But what did it all mean? Why were they butchering our calf, and where was Addison?

My first impulse was to go forward and ask about it. But a second glance at the men made me hesitate; they were evil-looking fellows, resembling Gipsies or tramps. A sensation of fear stole over me. Where could Addison possibly be?

I stood there for some minutes, watching the men cut up the carcass of the calf. Presently I heard a calf bleat; and the sound appeared to come from the direction of the old house, as if the animal were shut up inside it. Clearly our other calf was not far away.

A moment later a woman appeared in the doorway

of the house, and cried, "*Ahoo-ych! Moona-la!*" or words which sounded like that, to the men at the barn; and one of them responded gruffly, "*Na-la-ych!*" This woman was quite as dark of skin and as unkempt as the men. A very muddy wagon with three seats and a much-soiled flapping canvas top stood in the yard before the house.

I went hastily round through the pines to a point where I could get a better view of the house door. From the voices I judged that there were several women inside.

The necessity of learning something more definite as to what had become of Addison forced itself upon me, and still keeping out of sight in the bushes, I went round to the east side of the house, crossing a little-used road, and then approached in the rear of it. I wanted to see if Addison were really there and if that was our other calf indoors.

I could not get near without showing myself, however; but while watching and listening, I saw one of the men go to the house with a quarter of the calf. The three others proceeded to the wagon, carrying the calf-skin and the rest of the veal; then all four went indoors.

I hung round for some minutes, at a loss what to do. I could hear a frying-pan sizzling, and loud conversation, and I strained my ears to catch the sound of Addison's voice.

I was much frightened, but something must be done, I thought, and at last, mustering all my courage, I marched up to the doorway and knocked.

I had to knock twice, they were making so much noise inside. The voices then ceased suddenly, and a woman looked out from an inner room, but drew back. Two of the men appeared in her place.

"Good afternoon!" I said. "Have you seen two veal calves and a young man searching for them?"

They may not have understood me. They did not

reply, but exchanged a word together, then came slowly through the room toward me in a stealthy and catlike manner.

Before they had taken three steps, I turned and ran.

With a shout they rushed forth and gave chase, but I cut round the barn, gained the young pines beyond, then tacked to the right and scudded away, keeping out of their sight. I heard them coming after me, but ran on tiptoe myself, and kept tacking from them. In the course of a few moments I threw them off my track altogether, then sped back through the woods to our wagon.

Poor Theodora still sat there, holding the reins — the image of patience and anxiety. Seeing me burst forth, breathless, from the woods, she rose up suddenly under the umbrella.

"What is it? Oh, what is it?" she cried. "Haven't you found Ad?"

I sprang up beside her, seized the reins, and started the horses. "We must drive on to the nearest houses and get help," I said. "There are some very bad people over yonder! They have killed one of our calves and got the other shut up!"

"But Addison, where is he?" Theodora exclaimed, now nearly in tears.

"I don't know where he is," I replied. "I haven't seen him." I did not like to tell her all I had seen, but put the horses at a fast trot through the mud and the pouring rain.

Meanwhile Addison was having a curious experience.

When the calves escaped from the crate, he had followed fast after the two that ran off into the woods on the east side of the road. The homesick little creatures went bounding away like deer, and trying hard to keep them in sight, Addison had run after them, halter in hand. Like myself, he was soon drenched by the wet bushes and rain.

The calves raced on, and presently reached the partly open land beyond the woods. Here Addison lost trace of them among the young pines, and searched about for some time. The calves, however, had gone on and come to the old barn and deserted house, previously mentioned, where, as it chanced, this vagrant party of Gipsies or tramps had found shelter from the storm.

At last, hearing one of the calves bleat at a distance, Addison again hastened on, and soon came in sight of the old buildings. What he saw there gave him much pleasure. Four men and two or three women and a boy were out in the rain, surrounding and capturing the calves, one of which the men led into the barn, while the women coaxed and dragged the other into the house.

It struck Addison that they were rather queer-looking people; but that they should have turned out in the rain to secure stray calves seemed a kind act for which he felt inclined to thank them heartily. Before he could go forward, however, the men went from the barn to the house, and the whole party was inside, talking excitedly, when he reached the open doorway and knocked.

One of the men appeared, and when Addison bade him good morning, replied, "Gooda morn!" but in a rather surly tone.

"I am much obliged to you for catching my calves!" Addison said. "They got away from me over on the main road. I will put a halter on them and take them off. Shall I come in and get the one that's in the house here?"

The man hesitated, but drew back, as if assenting. Addison, therefore, entered and followed the man through the front room to a back room, where the others of the party, men and women, were gathered about the calf. Addison also noticed that they had opened the door leading down a flight of stairs to the cellar of the house, and it occurred to him that when

he knocked they had been on the point of putting the calf down into the cellar.

The whole swarthy party stood regarding him keenly, in silence; nor did any of them respond when Addison nodded and bade them good morning. In fact, he did not at all like their looks or their behavior, but he stepped forward to the calf and began tying the halter about its neck.

Then, quick as a flash, one of the women, standing behind him, threw a wet shawl over his head and held it there with both arms round his neck.

Addison jumped forward and struggled hard to throw the shawl and the woman off; but she held him tight. The others laid hold of him. He was hustled backward, pushed hard, and the next instant he pitched headlong down the cellar stairs and fell into a puddle of water below.

There he tore the shawl off his head, but at the same instant heard the cellar door slam, and found himself in utter darkness. It was one of those old farmhouses the cellars of which were banked up every autumn with earth or turf. Not a ray of light penetrated the place, and there appeared to be six inches or more of stagnant water on the cellar bottom. He found the stairs, and rushing up, attempted to force open the door. His captors, however, were now making the door fast, and greeted his efforts to break out with derisive shouts and much laughter.

At last he gave up and sat down on the cellar stairs. What to do he did not know. In fact, there was nothing he could do, save sit there and bear it — and there he was sitting all the while that I was capturing my three calves, and afterward, while I was reconnoitering the old house.

Meanwhile the vagrants slaughtered and dressed one of the calves. They probably intended to slaughter the other, so as to take the veal with them when they left the place. What they meant to do

with Addison, ultimately, can only be conjectured. They probably intended to keep him a prisoner till they had secured the calves and gone on. In the cellar of a deserted house like that he might have remained undiscovered for a day or two, and perhaps perished there, for the road which led past those old buildings was now scarcely more than a cart-track through the partly overgrown land, and at this time rarely used. The vagrants might have gone a day's journey on their devious way before any one had found him, or before he could have broken out of the cellar.

Very likely these strollers were hungry, and the sight of a fat veal calf was a great temptation to them; certainly they had begun cooking portions of it within five minutes of the time it was slaughtered.

My appearance on the scene, looking for Addison and the calves, disconcerted them, however, and upset their scheme. From the way they chased me, I suppose that they meant to catch me and chuck me into the cellar with Addison.

Night was at hand, and if they had succeeded, poor Theodora, sitting over there in the rain, holding the horses, would have been in serious plight. And so, indeed, would Ad and I have been, in that dark, foul old cellar!

But I had escaped, and now drove on as fast as I could. I felt sure that something had gone wrong with Addison.

Dread lest he had been murdered fell on me; but of this I said nothing to Theodora, for she was already much alarmed and very anxious. I kept the horses at a canter, and after about a mile we came to a large farmhouse, known as the Fowler place.

"We had better stop here overnight if the people will keep us," Theodora said, as I turned in. It was already as late as five o'clock in the afternoon.

Seeing strangers in the yard, Mr. Fowler and his wife and two boys came out on the piazza, and when

we told how far we had come and where we were going, they very kindly invited us to remain with them.

"Come right in," Mrs. Fowler said to Theodora. "You couldn't get to Portland to-night. Come right in out of this dreadful storm!"

The boys ran to open the great doors of the barn, and I drove in with our load. The farmer followed, to help in putting up the horses.

Once inside, I hastily related what had happened to us, told of Addison's disappearance and described the place where our calf had been slaughtered.

Mr. Fowler appeared somewhat incredulous at first. He regarded me closely. I fancy he thought I was romancing. Then he looked at the calves in the crate, asked my name and some other questions.

"The place where you say you lost your calves is the old Yates farm," he remarked. "But nobody has lived there for eight or ten years."

I urged him to go there with me at once.

"This is a bad storm to start out in," he replied. Just then, however, Theodora came out to the barn, accompanied by Mrs. Fowler, to whom she also had related our adventure. Mrs. Fowler urged her husband to go with us and look into the affair.

"James," said she, aside to him, "something bad has happened up there."

One of the boys now put in his word to say that he had seen a covered wagon with two "calico" horses of unusual appearance on that crossroad early in the morning.

Mr. Fowler still hesitated, as one but half-convinced, and I think it was the well-nigh tearful anxiety in Theodora's honest eyes that induced him to go. I wished him to take a gun, but he laughed.

"I guess we shall not need to shoot anybody," he said. "This is considered a pretty peaceful place."

The two boys went with us. They put on thick overcoats and took umbrellas. Theodora also insisted

on going, and then, against Mr. Fowler's advice, Mrs. Fowler herself donned her wraps and came out after us.

The boys led the way across the fields and pastures. We made haste, for it was now nearly night, and after walking a mile and a half or two miles, we came in sight of the Yates farm. No smoke was now rising from the chimney and no wagon stood in front of the house.

Everything looked very quiet. We went first to the barn, and there saw evidences of the calf having been killed. Somewhat cautiously, Mr. Fowler and I then approached the old house and went in; but apparently it was quite deserted, although embers still smoldered in the fireplace.

"Well, somebody has certainly been here to-day," Mr. Fowler said. "I guess they have really made way with your calves. No mistake about that."

He had no sooner spoken than a strangely muffled voice from somewhere close at hand cried, "Hello! Hello! Open the cellar door! Open the cellar door!"

Mr. Fowler was so startled that he turned suddenly, as if to beat a retreat. But I had recognized Addison's voice. Hastening to the back room, I saw the props set against a door, and guessed instantly what had happened. Addison, moreover, continued shouting lustily, "Open the cellar door!" — for he had heard us come in. "Open the cellar door! Let me out! Let me out!"

Theodora, Mrs. Fowler and the boys came rushing into the house as I was pulling away the props. I had no more than knocked the last one aside when the door flew open and Addison struggled out, very muddy, indeed, and in a sorry condition.

"Oh, but I'm glad you've come at last!" were his first words. "I thought nobody ever would come. Those rascals have been gone more than two hours! Something scared them off. They harnessed up and

left in a hurry. I heard them rushing round. But they killed that other calf and put it in their wagon. Then they drove off up the road back of the house."

Addison was so much exhausted that he had to sit down to recover himself. Theodora stood wiping her eyes, but they were tears of joy and relief, and as for the Fowlers, they were simply astonished.

"I have lived here for over forty years," the farmer exclaimed, "but I never knew of anything like this before! We must notify the sheriff and have those scamps arrested and punished — if they can be found."

It was getting dark, but Addison lighted a splinter at the fireplace, and showed us where he had passed the day on the cellar stairs, and he picked up the old shawl and shook it out.

"That's what the Gipsy woman put over my head," said he, with a grimace. It was a much-soiled old garment, but the fabric was very fine camel's hair, or cashmere. In its day it had been an expensive shawl — stolen, probably, by these vagrants.

Still it rained, and night came on as we made our way back across the bushy pastures to the Fowler place. The farmer, however, at once hitched up and drove to Gray Corners to notify the sheriff there of what had occurred. But I may say here that the miscreants were never brought to justice.

The next morning it was still raining, hard as ever, and we gladly accepted the kind invitation of the Fowlers to continue our sojourn with them. In fact, we all three had taken cold and were somewhat the worse for our adventure. Milk, too, by the bucketful had to be procured for those hungry calves.

The following day was Sunday, and as the storm had not yet abated, we remained there till the weather cleared on Monday. Indeed, we became quite well acquainted with these friends in need — an acquaintance which continued very cordially for years afterward.

Starting out early on Monday, we reached Portland at eleven o'clock, and passed the night at Uncle Lucas's, much as we had planned.

Our apparel, however, was the worse for the drenchings we had suffered, and we did not fail to notice that Aunt Barbara was not proud of our appearance. She was a very good woman, and we liked her; but she considered Uncle Lucas's dry-goods store in Portland immeasurably higher in the social scale than the Old Squire's farm up in Oxford County. Three years later, however, Uncle Lucas was very glad to accept a loan of four thousand dollars, without interest, from the Old Squire to tide his business over the hard times of those years; but I do not think this fact had the least effect on Aunt Barbara's social pride. To the end of her days she continued to look serenely down on us from her fancied social eminence. It must have afforded her a great deal of enjoyment, and I am sure it never injured us.

To this day, I believe Addison still retains in his possession the old camel's-hair shawl, as a souvenir of the line-storm, and of the vagrant "lady" who held him so tightly round the neck before consigning him to the depths of the cellar at the old Yates place.

But our load! We were all the following day trying to dispose of it. Twice Addison gave up in despair, declaring that we would do better to take it home than accept the low prices offered for it. Uncle Lucas was able to aid us but little. Times were so hard that nobody seemed willing to part with money. At what appeared a terrible sacrifice we finally closed out nearly everything, but the socks, mittens, sage and coriander. I think it was but four cents per pound, live weight, that we could get offered for these fine, fat veal calves; and we had lost two of them!

We reached home Wednesday night, after an absence of nearly a week, not a little discouraged. The total receipts of the trip were so beggarly that Gram

scolded in righteous indignation. The Old Squire, too, looked so crestfallen that next day, while gathering the last of the early apples, we young folks debated the situation seriously.

"Don't you think, Ad, that perhaps we had better put off going to the Academy this fall?" Theodora said at last.

"Well," replied Addison, judicially, "it does look a little as if it might be as well.

"Mind you," he added, "I am not giving up my plans, or anything like that. But all creation seems to be against us this fall!"

"Oh, dear," Ellen lamented, "isn't it discouraging?"

"Ho!" Halse exclaimed. "Who cares? I knew all the time we should never make it go."

For some reason this remark greatly irritated Addison. "Did you really know all that?" he exclaimed. "Your wisdom, Halse, will never hurt you.

"If I live I shall put this through and get an education," he added, with great determination.

"Let me know when you do it," retorted Halse.

But Theodora and Ellen shook hands on a pledge with Addison to go on as soon as the way looked a little clearer, and I joined them in it.

"I am sure our affairs will brighten by next spring," Theodora said hopefully.

"And we are going to have Master Pierson back this winter, anyhow," Ellen exclaimed. "That's worth a good deal."

"Yes, old Joel is a whole team, and a horse to let, besides," cried Addison. "How he will drive us this winter!"

"And we still have fifteen dollars left for a private school!" Theodora added.

So, despite hard times, "line-storms" and financial stringency, we took courage and put faith in the future.

CHAPTER XXIV

THEODORA'S BARREL OF BALDWINS

FARM work, meantime, kept us very busy. There was a plentiful apple crop that season, Baldwins especially; for a fortnight we were gathering apples every day until past the middle of October. Fair weather had held, but now there were signs of a change.

"Just in time, boys, and not an hour to spare," the Old Squire said, when Addison and I drove in from the orchard with the last load of Baldwins. "There's a northeaster coming on; but we have got ahead of it."

All the afternoon the sky had been turning lead-colored; a raw chilliness was in the air; and as night fell, an owl, over in the wood-lot, began hooting — that dismal, low note that so often presages a storm.

Owing to the suddenness with which cold weather sometimes came on, apple-picking was never a matter about which we felt secure. It was sometimes a three weeks' job with us, for we rarely got less than four or five hundred barrels from our trees.

But that year we finished picking just in time, and during the long storm of sleet, wind and rain that followed, we were comfortably packing our crop in the apple-house, with a cheery fire blazing in the fireplace.

Addison was culler, and had the culling-rack set breast-high, where he could run the apples one by one down a burlap spout into the barrels. Halstead carried the apples from the bins to the rack in a bushel basket.

The Old Squire always packed his apples with great

care. Formerly he had done the culling himself, but for two years he had delegated the task to Addison, whose eyes he found were sharper than his to detect worm-holes, or the little dry spots of "bitter-rot" under the skin.

I had been promoted to the post of facer, in which my duties were to select fifty or more fine apples for every barrel, and arrange them, stem ends up, in circles, directly beneath each head.

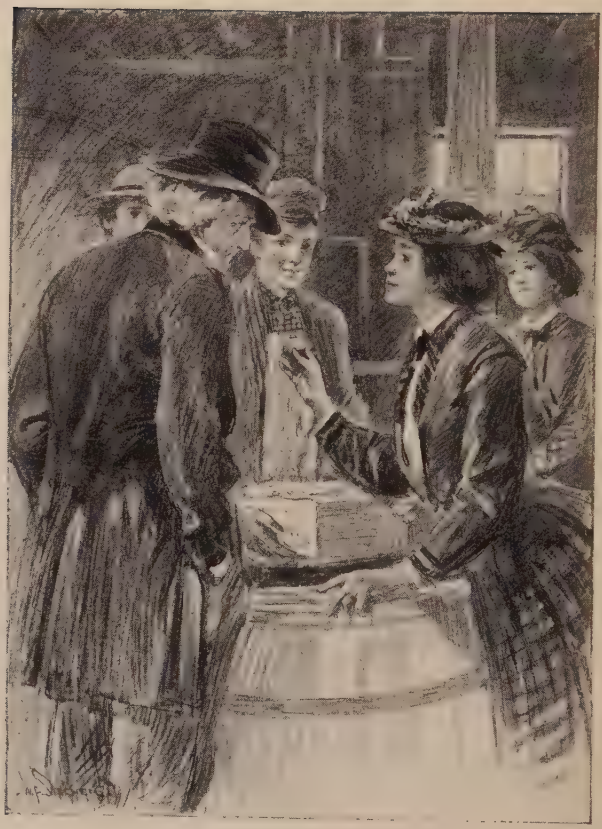
"But I want every barrel of apples that goes from our farm to be an honest barrel," the Old Squire used to say to us. "Put just as good apples in the middle of the barrel as you do at the heads."

He himself was header. After Addison had culled and filled the barrel, and I had faced it, the Old Squire loosened the top hoops, forced the head down into the groove of the chimes with a clamp and screw, then nailed it in place. The name of the packer, together with the variety and the grade of the fruit, was then stenciled on the head. Then the barrel was ready to go forth into the world's market — over the sea to Liverpool, or west to St. Louis, or even to California.

When the apples were very good, the Old Squire was accustomed to send a number of carefully packed barrels of Baldwins to old friends and acquaintances at a distance. Nearly always he sent one to "Uncle Hannibal" Hamlin, who was then Senator from Maine. Mr. Hamlin's early home was but a few miles from the old farm. He and the Old Squire had been boyhood friends and fellow students at Hebron Academy.

The Senator now lived at Bangor, when he was not at Washington; but he was wont to drive over to call on us whenever he revisited his native county. It was with Uncle Hannibal that we young people partook of the fried pies one day when the Old Squire and Gram were away from home.

I need hardly say that Senator Hamlin's barrel was



THAT BARREL OF BALDWINS.

a particularly good one. As a return courtesy, he used to send us the *Congressional Record* and all the more interesting government reports.

From fifty to sixty barrels a day were as many as we could pack. Ellen and Theodora sometimes came out to help cull and face, or put on the stencil. Altogether it was work that we liked, for generally we had a row of apples set to roast at the fireplace. Sometimes, too, Ellen would bring out a pitcher of syrup, and fry buckwheat cakes.

On the second day of the storm the Old Squire put up his friends' barrels, as we called them. Theodora helped him select fine apples for Uncle Hannibal. They put in a few Northern Spys, some Rhode Island Greenings, for mince pies, and half a bushel of large Roxbury Russets at the bottom, for these will keep till spring.

But presently I noticed that Theodora grew silent and thoughtful. At last she said, "Grandfather, would you be willing to let me pack a barrel of our Baldwins to send to that Virginia family, near Chancellorsville, who took my father into their house after the battle, and were so kind to him the day he died?"

This family was named Revell. They had cared for Uncle Robert as if he had been one of their own men. At that time they had no means of communicating with us; but after the war, Miss Cecilia Revell wrote to us, and sent Uncle Robert's watch, pocketbook and two ambrotypes of his wife and little daughter Theodora.

"Why, yes," the Old Squire said, after a moment, in answer to Theodora's question. "But do you suppose it would be well received from us? The Revells have suffered from the war, and may not feel kindly toward us."

"Oh, I am sure they would accept it. That was a kind letter that Miss Revell wrote us. Oh, I should so like to send them something, something of the very best we have!"

"You shall, then! You shall!" the Old Squire exclaimed.

That afternoon we helped Theodora pack the barrel of Baldwins to go to Virginia. We put in also a few Northern Spys, Greenings, Sponge Russets, Roxbury Russets, Gilliflowers, Spitzenbergs, and last, but far from least, half a bushel of what we called "Orange-specks" — because, when ripe, they were yellowish in color, with numerous little brown specks under the skin.

We had four Orange-speck trees. The apples were broad and rather flat, with a strong stem, and from sixteen to twenty-four very plump brown seeds. They were mellow and good in December and January, and of all the thirty varieties in the Old Squire's orchard, we deemed those from the Orange-speck tree by the garden wall the best.

The girls carefully wrapped each Orange-speck in light-blue tissue-paper, put them in the middle of the barrel, and among them laid an envelope, with a card on which Theodora had written:

"From the daughter and nephews of the Union soldier whom you so kindly cared for after the dreadful battle of Chancellorsville.

"These apples grew on the farm of his parents, in Maine."

We faced and headed the barrel, and a day or two later drew it to the railway-station, and sent it on its way.

As much as a month passed. Then, on the day before Thanksgiving, a letter came for Theodora, a really beautiful letter. It was from Miss Cecilia Revell. Theodora shed tears over it. She kept it for years, and it would still be treasured but for the fire in 1883, which destroyed the old farmhouse, and with it, a thousand such little keepsakes. Miss Revell wrote in part:

"What we did for your father was only what I am

sure you would have done for any Confederate soldier in distress near your home.

"These are delicious apples, particularly those yellow ones with the little specks in them. In Albemarle County there is a fine apple, called the Albemarle Pippin, which is somewhat like them, but yours have the finer flavor. My brother, who deals in fruit at Richmond, is very desirous to know the name of these yellow apples, and if you grow many of them in Maine."

The letter concluded by saying that Miss Revell and her brother were sending us a return offering of something which grew in Virginia.

A few days later we were notified from the railway-station that a barrel had arrived for us. Theodora and Addison hitched up old Sol at once, and drove to get it.

It proved to be a barrel of the finest sweet potatoes we had ever seen. Down in the barrel was a box containing two kinds of queer yellow fruit, new to us young Northerners. Addison and the Old Squire guessed what they were — persimmons and papaws, yellow, soft, and just right for eating.

This pleasant exchange of Maine and Virginia products was continued for a number of years. In 1872 Theodora visited the Revells, and was royally entertained; and the year following, Miss Revell and her sister Arabella spent a month with us, and a delightful visit it proved. It was from them that we learned how to make two of our now most-prized breakfast dishes, "old Virginia egg pone" and "spider cake."

In the Old Dominion they have plain corn-meal pones and egg pones. When made right and baked right, both are delicious. Of course, much depends on the skill of the maker, and not a little on the corn-meal.

But a real yellow-tinted Indian spider cake, with the eggs nicely omeletted, seasoned, and cooked half-way

between the upper and under crusts — well, there's nothing like it as a breakfast dish. The young ladies from Virginia taught us the art.

Theodora's barrel of apples was indirectly the cause of a considerable demand from Richmond for our Baldwins. The people there, through Mr. Revell, learned that we shipped good fruit; and one year the Old Squire sent a hundred barrels there.

CHAPTER XXV

SPRANGLE - LEGS

AFTER apple harvest came the late fall ploughing, although the ground had already begun to freeze nights.

It was at about this time that the Old Squire became much interested in a new farming project. For a number of evenings he figured away steadily at it but said little. Gram, however, grew uneasy and evidently had misgivings; she was very apprehensive as to the Old Squire's ambitious new departures in business.

This time the new departure was hop-raising. A sudden demand for hops had risen throughout the country. Many of our older readers will remember it. Eighty cents, and even a dollar, a pound was paid for hops. Fortunes bade fair to come from the new crop, and the Old Squire — along with many other Maine farmers — had resolved to embark in it, and to put in six acres the following spring.

It was then that the question of hop-poles arose. Not far from two thousand poles to the acre are required. Cedar is best for this purpose, and the poles need to be about fifteen feet in length.

But twelve thousand hop-poles of the right size are not everywhere procurable. Up in the Great Woods, however, five miles from the old farm, in a swamp bordering Sheepskin Pond, there was just what was wanted in the way of cedar; and early in November that fall, after the swamp had frozen, all hands went up there to get out those hop-poles. A little log camp was rolled up near the pond shore, a " bean-hole " dug,

a "pudding-oven" built, and best of all, Theodora and Ellen went along with us, to cook our meals and make things cheery.

As fast as we cut the poles we brought them together, so as to have them handy to haul home after snow came; and as days passed, long piles of poles, seven or eight feet high, were stacked up round the camp. What appetites we had there, too, in that crisp, cold air, and how good it seemed to come into camp at night, when the bean-hole was uncovered and the pudding-oven was opened! There were deer about the swamp, and we boys wished very much to hunt them and have some venison; but one cannot cut a hundred hop-poles a day and hunt, too.

Beautiful, clear Indian-summer weather prevailed for four days, but on the fifth day there came a change. A thin white haze gathered high in the sky, and a halo formed about the sun.

The Old Squire, who had been counting up the piles of poles, cast his weather-eye round.

"There's a snow-storm coming soon," he said. "We shall have to go down home to-night. We must get in the young cattle, drive the sheep down to the barns, and make things snug for winter."

"Shall we go, too?" Ellen asked.

"You wouldn't want to stay up here alone overnight, would you?" the old gentleman asked her. "There is no real danger, if you would not be lonesome," he added.

"I'll stay if Doad will!" Ellen exclaimed.

Theodora seemed a little reluctant, but it was such a long, hard tramp home through the woods that she concluded it was better for them to remain. "But you will surely be back to-morrow forenoon," she said, a little anxiously.

Aside from the lonesomeness, however, none of us thought there was any danger. Wolves and panthers had even then wholly disappeared from the Maine

forests; and as for bears, the most of them were already in their winter dens. It seemed better for the girls to stay and keep camp than to tramp home and back. Addison rigged a bar for the camp door; there was a candlestick and candles. Halstead and I brought in several big armfuls of dry wood, and we bade them good night and left them.

We went home, and till long after dark were busy at the barns by lantern-light. Winter was evidently at hand, and there was much to do. The sky had become completely overcast, and that chill, dead, stony silence was in the air which presages a snowfall in Maine.

In the meantime, at the camp up in the woods, the evening was proving an eventful one. By four o'clock it had grown dusk. The girls fastened their door, then lighted a candle and prepared their supper.

From the first both felt rather lonely. Now and then either Ellen or Theodora would go to the door to peep out and listen. Not a breath of air stirred the cedars. It was one of those utterly silent nights in November, so still that even the faint tinkling of the new ice, forming along the pond shore, came to their ears.

Then, suddenly, loud, uncouth bellowings arose at a distance in the swamp.

"Now what can that be?" Ellen exclaimed. "It sounds like a cow, only wilder."

They heard it several times; and a little later they heard some large animal or animals coming along the pond shore.

Ten or fifteen minutes passed, when from the other side of the swamp a prodigious crashing of the undergrowth began, accompanied by short, fierce snorts. These drew an immediate response from directly across the pond, and were followed a moment later by loud splashings, which seemed to come nearer every moment.

"It must be moose," Theodora said.

What followed was sufficiently alarming to startle even an experienced woodsman. The moose that was swimming across the arm of the pond opposite the camp floundered ashore with a hoarse snort, and at almost the same instant the one the girls had first heard came rushing through the swamp from the other side.

With a clash of their antlers, the two forest giants met among the thick cedars. To the alarmed girls it seemed as if the animals were beating down the whole swamp, and might at any moment overrun the little camp. Round and about they circled, and went crashing up and down the pond shore. After a few moments, however, one appeared to have worsted the other, and either pushed or pursued him to a distance, the defeated one turning at bay here and there, when again the clash of antlers would be heard.

Yet even above the din of conflict the girls heard plaintive bleating notes, and at last dimly discerned two or three shadowy forms huddled among the piles of cedar poles close to the camp. Moose appeared to be all round them.

There was quiet for a time. Then the battle was suddenly renewed, the combatants coming headlong among the piles of poles, bounding over them, scattering poles as if they had been jack-straws. Down crashed pile after pile, some of the poles flying against the camp, and even lodging on the roof.

The rush soon passed, however, the fighters going off as suddenly as they had approached. But distressed outcries were now heard close at hand.

"Some of them got hurt, I guess," Ellen whispered; but neither she nor Theodora dared to open the door.

The notes of distress continued, and the fight now having passed to a distance, Theodora unfastened the door and peered forth. Hop-poles lay aslant and criss-cross in every direction. The girls went out with a

candle, and saw a small black and gray animal half-buried by the poles of a pile which had fallen on it.

For some time they were too much alarmed to attempt anything for the relief of the animal; but at last, while Theodora held the candle, Ellen attempted to pull away the poles.

It was a moose calf.

Even after the poles were pulled away, the little creature was unable to get up. One of its long gray fore legs was broken. Whenever they approached, it bleated frantically; and fearful lest the cow moose might return, the girls retired into the camp.

They were not disturbed further, and that was the condition of affairs there in the cedar swamp when we returned the next morning. The sky was darkly overcast. It had snowed a little. Addison and I were ahead of the others; and when we came in sight of the camp, we did not know what to think. On all sides the great piles of hop-poles were knocked down. Poles lay every which way. The camp seemed half buried by them; and never shall I forget the sense of horror that fell on me as we approached — for through the thin film of snow I caught sight of faint blood-stains where the moose had fought and gored each other.

Addison, too, had stopped short and stood staring around. He was quite white. "Something awful has happened!" he whispered. Then, throwing aside the poles, we made a rush to the camp door — only to find the girls smiling and all right inside.

Breathlessly they related what had happened. We then examined the moose calf, still lying there helpless. The others now came up; and the Old Squire thought it would be more merciful to put the disabled creature out of its misery at once. Addison, however, wished to set its leg with splints, as is sometimes done in the case of lambs and little colts with broken legs. After a fashion this was accomplished, and we afterward

put the little moose in a sling, so that its feet would not touch the ground. In this position it was fed and watered. It would eat apples; merely the odor of an apple would set it wagging its stubby tail.

A week later, when we had finished cutting poles there, we hauled the moose calf home on a horse-sled, and slung it up again for a month or more in a stall at the west barn. Gradually its leg knit, but our splint had become displaced several times; and altogether, our rude surgery proved rather a bad job. That left fore leg projected stiffly outward, so that when the animal finally began to walk, it had so odd a gait that the Old Squire nicknamed it Sprangle-Legs.

A moose calf is a tall, odd-shaped creature, not easy to describe. I only wish I had a photograph of Sprangle-Legs, but we did not have many cameras in those days. His legs were much longer than those of a young colt's, and his body looked disproportionately short. His nose and muzzle were relatively huge; his ears, too, were very large, and black on the outside, but shaded to a pearly soft gray within. This gave him an odd, wild look when he raised them or turned them sidewise. Those ears, indeed, seemed to be constantly in motion. Down to his knees his legs were faced in black, but below the knee were a bright drab, as were also the entire under parts of his body.

While in the sling the girls had made a pet of him, feeding him with apples, and also carrots, of which he was very fond. Whenever they entered the barn, Sprangle-Legs would give forth a peculiar throaty "bla-art," and come *sprangling* to meet them. One might suppose, perhaps, that a fawn, or a moose calf, being of a wild species, would display shyness and be inclined to escape from captivity. But this is not so. Young deer or moose soon become as tame as cosset lambs.

Sprangle-Legs had absolutely no fear of human beings. Unless the gates and doors were carefully

shut, he would follow the girls tumultuously back to the house and come rushing into the kitchen, much to Gram's disgust. We kept him in a pen with four little colts, but he formed a habit — his legs were so long — of stepping over bars.

In the spring we turned him out to pasture with the four colts.

Addison thought that he would probably take to the woods as the season advanced, but he did nothing of the sort. He liked domesticated life — particularly apples, carrots and potatoes. He was greedy for salt, too, and for oats, crusts of bread, or anything else from the kitchen. Several times that summer he got out of the pasture and came sprangling to the house; and toward the end of the season we were obliged to put a "yoke" on him — not to prevent him from escaping to the forest, but to keep him away from the house!

With the first snows he came down to the barn again with the colts. As nearly as we could guess, he was now about sixteen months old, and had a spike antler coming out, five inches long. His head was now carried full six feet high. Whenever he got loose at the barn, he made a rush for the kitchen, and he now pretty nearly filled the kitchen door. Gram did not hesitate to put him to flight with the fire poker; but even that did not prevent him from coming directly back if he smelled an apple.

Moose have the sense of smell very acutely developed. Sprangle-Legs would track any of us as readily as a dog. Time and again he got loose and followed us when we were going to the post-office or to mill. He would run till he overtook us, but I always thought he followed rather from scent than sight; his eyesight was far from keen.

While the winter school was keeping, he broke out one forenoon and came to the schoolhouse. We heard a clatter in the entry outside, and Master Pierson, thinking that some one had come and knocked, opened

the outer door. Instantly, before the astonished master could stop him, in came Sprangle-Legs with that raucous bla-art of his. I imagine he knew we were there, or else smelled the apples in our lunch-baskets.

To say there were high times inside that schoolhouse for the next five or ten minutes would be to state it mildly. At last Addison and Ellen and I pushed and pulled him out, toled him home with apples and shut him up again.

About a month after that, Uncle Lucas and Aunt Barbara Bushnell came up from Portland to visit us, as they usually did in maple-syrup time. They came on the afternoon train, and did not arrive at the farm till evening.

At breakfast the next morning Addison, who had finished a little ahead of the rest and was in a hurry, went out and left the kitchen door ajar. A few moments later, quite without warning, in rushed Sprangle-Legs. Uncle Lucas and Aunt Barbara had never seen him before, nor heard of him. Beyond doubt they were much startled.

Uncle Lucas was a nervous man. He jumped up from table, nearly upsetting it. "Stars and mercies!" he exclaimed. "What sort of beasts do you keep, Joseph?"

The Old Squire laughed, and Ellen and I made haste to expel the intruder; but Gram was vexed; her patience was nearly exhausted. In truth, Sprangle-Legs was getting rather too large and boisterous for a house pet. He was of no earthly use, and a great bother, yet we had grown much attached to him. Although an awkward, uncouth creature, his black, brown and gray markings, big, clear eyes and large, soft ears rendered him rather attractive than otherwise. Besides, he was really very fond of us.

But a few weeks later, in May, another of his escapades led to our finally getting rid of him.

The celebration of Memorial Day, as it is at present

observed, had not yet begun in Maine, but addresses in remembrance of the dead soldiers were given in many places. On the last Sunday in May, that spring, Mr. James Stone, formerly a chaplain in one of the Maine regiments, delivered a commemorative oration at the old meeting-house two miles from the farm. We all went, except Halstead, who was in one of his moods of discontent that week. Wagon-loads of apple blossoms, lilacs, wild cherry and pear plum were drawn to the church early in the morning, and the cheerless old interior was converted into a bower of springtide bloom.

There was a large audience for that place. Memories of the dead were still fresh and poignant.

Toward the close of the address there was a most unseemly interruption. The day was warm; the doors stood open; and on a sudden a loud clatter at the entrance caused all to turn.

It was Sprangle-Legs! Addison and I always suspected that Halstead had turned him loose. He dashed in, head aloft, stood still a moment, then, with one of his awful bla-arts, came sprangling down the aisle to the Old Squire's pew, and put his head in. It seemed to me that he banged against every pew door on the way.

Everybody jumped up. The orator paused in astonishment. Confusion and laughter rapidly succeeded to pathos and tears. Poor Gram turned pink from mortification.

We did the best we could and acted as promptly as possible. Addison seized our obstreperous pet about the neck, and the Old Squire and I helped push and pull him out of the meeting-house as expeditiously as could be done.

The old gentleman then hastened back indoors to apologize and smooth the matter over, while Addison and I got a nose halter from the wagon and set ourselves to lead Sprangle-Legs home.

We were an hour or more on the way, and the Old Squire, with Gram and the girls, arrived almost as soon as we did. Gram had not spoken at all, and the girls looked overawed at the extent of the scandal which had befallen.

It was now pretty plain that some disposition would have to be made of Sprangle-Legs. Addison advised advertising him for sale in the Portland papers. This was done, but not much came of it at first; yet in the end it led to our swapping Sprangle-Legs for a light wagon, with the keeper of a livery-stable, who had recently bought another young moose, and wished to make up a span to sell to a certain celebrated showman.

The subsequent history of our old farm pet was eventful. When he was two years old his erratic leg was successfully straightened by another surgical operation, and later he became one of a pair of "trotting moose" that travelled extensively with a circus. But this is ahead of my story.

CHAPTER XXVI

MY RIDE WITH MARY INEZ

FOUR or five days later, after we had finished our task of cutting the hop-poles, I had a curious adventure, of a somewhat similar nature to that just recorded.

Of the Old Squire's lumber camp on Lurvey's Stream, up in the Great Woods, I have already spoken. The loggers had now gone there for their winter's work, cutting spruce; and if the snow had come and laid, as the weather during the first of the month seemed to promise, the teams for hauling the lumber would have been sent up there before this time, and taken their grain for the winter, also the food supply for the men. But there came a week or more of warm days — a kind of belated Indian summer — which carried off what little snow had fallen earlier in the month.

Hungry loggers who work hard consume rations rapidly; and on the evening of the 13th word was sent down to us at the farm that the camp was running short of food. The stores were already bought and put up, waiting to go with the teams and sleds; but as the weather continued soft, with the ground still bare, the Old Squire sent me off, next morning, with one yoke of oxen and the two-wheeled cart, to pick my way up to camp, and haul a load of supplies. The distance was nearly twenty miles, much of the way through the woods; and as oxen are slow, a day was required for the journey to the camp, and another to return home.

The road was about as bad as a road can be — a mere trail, never much used till after snow came.

I had three bushels of white beans, two barrels of pork, a barrel of flour, a ten-gallon keg of molasses, four bushels of Indian meal in two bags, a two-gallon keg of vinegar, two barrels of cooking apples and one of eating apples, four bushels of potatoes, four of turnips, half a barrel of sugar, two boxes of salt, and some other articles, besides half a dozen axes, three peevies and two steel wedges — altogether about a ton in weight, but well packed in the cart body and securely lashed on account of the rough road.

It was not deemed a hazardous trip for me. Old Bright and Broad were used to carting. They were two eight-year-old Durham cattle, seven feet and four inches in girth, and steady as clocks. However rough the road, they could be depended on to move calmly and slowly. In fact, they were rather too slow; two miles an hour was about their natural rate of travel, unless they were hastened with the goad.

I was given an early start from home, stopping only for a half-hour to bait by the roadside. I reached the camp just at dusk, and was hailed with delight by the eighteen loggers there.

In prudence, I should have started on my return trip before sunrise the next morning; but after breakfast I was tempted to go off with two of the younger loggers to see a beaver house at a pond in a stream, some distance from camp. We lay in wait here for two hours, hoping to get sight of the beavers; and with one delay and another, it was noon before I yoked my team and made a start.

I now found that I was to have a passenger in the cart, the wife of one of the loggers, who had come up to the camp on foot during the forenoon from their house, fourteen miles below, to bring her laboring husband his winter supply of socks and knit leggings. As there was no place for her to stay overnight, she

MARY INEZ.

had to return that afternoon; and as she was tired from her long walk, I could do no less than offer her transportation, if she deemed riding in the cart over that rough road easier than walking — a subject for doubt.

She decided to ride, and her husband, having found a half-barrel for her to sit on, asked me to drive very carefully. The affectionate manner in which he then took leave of his dear "Mary Inez" — as he frequently called her — impressed my youthful mind with a high sense of her preciousness.

We had not proceeded far when we began to have music. The previous morning some one, whose duty it was, had forgotten to "grease the cart," that is, to lubricate the large wooden axle of the wheels. It had not run dry during the outward trip; but now it began to call out piercingly for grease.

The massive wheels had great wooden fellies and huge hubs, such as the pioneer wheelwright was accustomed to hew out fifty years ago. The axle, or "ex," as the farmers called it, required frequent applications of lard.

I knew very well what the matter was. But there was no help for it now, so I drove on. There was no danger that the wooden axle would heat or choke, but the sounds that issued from it were horrible.

Groo-ooo-oo-eee-ew-ew-aw-oook! Groo-ooo-oo-eee-ew-ew-aw-oook! at every revolution. It soon became about as much as the human ear could endure.

I had driven slowly to spare my passenger the jolts. But the sky had been growing overcast since morning, and now the certainty of rain led me to hasten our progress with the goad.

This proved rash, for immediately an unusually hard jounce over a log threw the woman off her seat. Falling forward, she struck her nose on the rail of the cart body, with the result that the blood began to flow.

She got out of the cart and sat down on a stone,

and a very distressful interval followed. About all I could do for her was to fetch cold water in my bucket from a rill at a distance, and then look on. It seemed to me that she must surely bleed to death. The hemorrhage continued for nearly an hour. I thought it would never stop, and was filled with panic. If she bled to death there, I was afraid that her husband might accuse me of maltreating her, for I felt a little guilty because I had driven the cart so fast.

The flow of blood stopped at last, and looking very pale and dishevelled, the woman got into the cart again. The oxen, meanwhile, had lain down in the yoke, and were chewing their cuds.

We went on. But it was not long before sleet began to fall, the beginning of one of those southerly storms which in that part of the country often come on in the afternoon, increasing in violence during the evening and night. Evening, in fact, was at hand, for at this season of the year the afternoons are short.

Passing an opening where several haystacks had been put up for the lumber camps, I stopped, and bringing large armfuls of the hay, piled it high about my passenger's seat, to keep Mary Inez from bumping her precious nose again. As the wayside was very brushy, I now took up my own position on the cart tongue, where I could hold on by the "sword" at the front end of the cart body, and hastened old Bright and Broad on with frequent pricks from my goad.

At best, however, we could proceed only at a walk — and with every turn of the wheels that long, loud and dismal *Groo-ooo-oo-eee-ew-ew-aw-oook!* went echoing through the forest.

Cloudy nights in November are always very dark, but I do not believe that ever a darker one than this descended.

I had a whale-oil lantern, which we always carried when out with a team; and lighting it, I tied it by the ring to the top of the sword, whence it cast a feeble

light on the backs of the oxen and on the wan face of my passenger in the cart.

We went squeaking and bumping on our way for two or three miles more, the oxen keeping the road from an instinct which cattle have, rather than from sense of sight.

Owls hooted, as they often do before storms; and once the oxen stopped short and were very reluctant to go on, probably from scenting a bear in the road ahead.

Shortly afterward we forded a brook, and then the woman knew where we were.

"'Tis three miles from here home. We'll soon be there," said she, and became more cheerful.

She had been anxious concerning her three small children, left in the care of their grandfather, an old hunter and Maine woods guide.

But the worst of our adventures was still to come. As we plodded up the ascending ground beyond the brook, I heard a loud snort behind us, and above the squeaking of the cart caught the sound of hoofs splashing through the brook.

"Somebody's coming!" exclaimed the woman. Indeed, my first thought was that a man on horseback was galloping after us, although to gallop a horse over such a road in such darkness would have been a feat worthy of The Wild Huntsman himself.

In a moment the sounds of galloping came close up behind us, and I shouted, "Hello, there! Wait a bit and I'll turn out!" and jumped down to execute the promise.

But with another wild snort of his horse, the rider turned and went galloping back down the hill to the brook and across it.

"My goodness!" cried the woman. "He must be crazy!" I thought so, too; moreover, I was mystified, and began to be frightened.

Another snort far back along the road blended with

the creak and groan of our axle, then more galloping; and again the wild rider came close up behind us!

Again I shouted, "Hello, there! Who are you? What do you want? Do you want to go by? If you want to go by, say so."

The only response was another snort and another mad gallop back along the road.

"I caught a glimpse of something!" said the woman, in an awestruck whisper. "It looked like an old stump — as if he was carrying an old stump over his head!"

This was far from lucid or explanatory. I had discerned nothing myself. The glimmer of the lantern was a little nearer my face than that of my passenger and prevented my seeing. A chill stole over me — fear, no doubt. The oxen, too, were hurrying forward at an unusual rate. One of them gave vent to low mooing sounds.

We had gone on but a few rods, however, when our strange pursuer rushed after us yet again at a furious gallop, as if to ride us down, and came up to the very tail-board of the cart. Once more I shouted, "Hello, there! What's wanted, anyhow? Are you trying to get by us?"

Again it wheeled, snorting. Mary Inez screamed outright, then hid in the hay.

"Oh, I saw that stump again!" she cried.

But I saw nothing.

The thing galloped away, but instead of going back far, plunged into the woods to the right of the road. We heard it go tearing through the fir growth, crash on crash. The sounds moved past us, describing a circuit through the woods, then crossed the road ahead, came completely round us on the left, and approached from the rear again.

I now felt sure that no human being was concerned in the demonstration, since a man could hardly ride a

horse at such a rate through thick woods. A suspicion as to what it was began to dawn in my mind.

Meanwhile the oxen had been hurrying on at a great rate, and presently we heard some one shout, and saw through the storm the glimmer of a lantern in the road ahead.

"That's father!" cried the woman. "We're most home!" and she called out joyfully.

As she surmised, it proved to be her father, Jared Robbins, who had heard the distressful squeaking of my wheels, and guessing that his daughter might be with me, had come forth to meet her.

When we told him that we were being followed by some prodigious beast, the old guide at once confirmed my suspicion as to what it was.

"That 'ere's a moose!" said he. "He heerd your cart ex creaking, and he thought 'twas another moose, a cow moose, bawlin'! I don't wonder. I vum, I thought 'twas one myself when I heerd ye comin'!

"Now put out your light," the old man continued, in some little excitement. "Put out your light and I'll put out mine. Then you drive on slow and let her creak, while I hiper back to the house and git my rifle."

The old man hastened away. And getting down from my perch on the cart tongue, I drove slowly into the opening where their house stood. Robbins soon came out with his gun; but although we heard the moose snort several times at a distance, the animal did not approach the cart again.

It was now about nine o'clock, and owing to the storm, I decided to remain there for the night. Before morning the sleet had changed to snow, as much as five inches having fallen. So inclement was the day that I was in no haste to set off.

But the old woodsman, Robbins, had risen and gone out at daybreak to hunt the moose. He tracked the animal to a swamp some two miles away, and getting sight of it here amidst the snowy boughs of a thicket

of young firs, brought it to the ground with his first shot.

He returned in great good humor; and after Mary Inez had prepared breakfast, I yoked my oxen, and going with the old man to the swamp, hauled the moose to the house. It had a fine spreading set of antlers — probably the "old stump" which my passenger had seen.

While I was assisting Robbins to hang up the carcass and dress it, a messenger from home, in the person of Addison, arrived in quest of me, riding one of the farm horses. The family had become alarmed for my safety, and had sent Addison to look me up.

We were all the afternoon getting down to the farm, six miles, but had a quarter of moose meat to show for my adventure.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE OLD SQUIRE'S CLOCKS

THANKSGIVING DAY came the following week — November 23rd, I think; and our long anticipated winter school, with Master Pierson again, was to begin on the Monday after.

The year had rolled round. It had brought us its touch of sadness, also its eager new hopes and ambitions. There was the vacant chair at table, the bright little face absent forever; but the faces of us who remained were now keenly set toward the future.

It was my second Thanksgiving at the Old Squire's. The first was at the time of the great snow-storm, when we got lost at Stoss Pond and were out all night — as related in book first of this series.

This second Thanksgiving was quite a different occasion, marked by a curious incident and not a little excitement at table. To describe it properly, however, I must revert to a circumstance which I forgot to speak of in its proper place.

For three generations the old farmhouse garret had been a dim and dusty repository of cast-off articles, and offered a fine field for rummage and discovery, particularly on rainy days.

Hung up there were old surtouts, faded blue army overcoats and caps, and still older poke bonnets and hats. There were two old " wheels " for wool " rolls " and a smaller one for flax, " swifts " for winding yarn, a large wooden loom for home-made cloth and blankets, and another for rag carpets.

There were saddles and brass-mounted harness, and

andirons with big round brass heads; old cradles, bread-troughs and wooden trays; three tall German silver candlesticks and six old whale-oil lamps; a Springfield army rifle and haversack, and a much older "Queen's Arm," with a wooden cartridge-box hanging from the trigger-guard.

Then, too, there were dusty chests, a dozen or more of them, pushed back under the eaves, some containing leather-covered books, Bibles, hymn-books, sermons, files of the *Pine State News*, and many copies of the once popular *Columbian Magazine*.

Indeed, I could hardly more than begin to enumerate all there was in that garret; but I must not forget "Old Uncle Ansel," as we called it, a curious combination of fly-wheels, balance-wheels, tubes and other nondescript gear, set in an oak frame as large as a large table. This odd contrivance stood for the effort of one of the Old Squire's uncles, back in 1830, to solve the then fascinating problem of perpetual motion. It was a disagreeable bit of family history, and there was some sort of queer occurrence connected with it, of which the old people were disinclined to speak.

On wet days we used to steal away up there to pore over the stories in those old *Columbian Magazines;* and Theodora and Ellen were accustomed to time their stay — when they knew that Gram could not spare them long down-stairs — by giving "Old Uncle Ansel" a whirl as they read.

A smart twirl of the fly-wheel would cause the machine to revolve silently for almost exactly seven minutes, and two twirls stood for about a quarter of an hour.

By the time we had been at the farm a year, there was not much in that garret which we had not investigated — with one exception.

At the farther end of it, the end next to the kitchen ell, there was a small, low room, partitioned off by itself, like a large closet, although otherwise the garret

was all one large loft, extending back under the eaves of the house on both sides, but having two small windows at each end.

The door of this little room was secured by a padlock. There was no peeping in at a keyhole; nor could we boys come round on the ell roof to look in at the window, for the green paper curtain was drawn close down, and there were nails over the top of the window-sashes. No one appeared to know where the key was; and whenever any of us had asked what was in there, Gram always replied, "Nothing of any consequence."

But one day, when our elders had gone away, my cousin Ellen chanced to be rummaging for something or other on the top shelf of the high dresser, and knocked down a rusty key. "Now what in the world do you suppose that's the key to?" said she.

Theodora was quite unable to answer that question, and they laid the key on the table, where we boys saw it when we came in from the field to our noon dinner.

"That looks like a padlock key," said Addison, and he examined it for some moments. "I tell you that's the key to that closet up-garret!" he suddenly exclaimed.

"Let's try it and see!" cried Ellen; and with that we all jumped up from the table and raced to the garret. For a long time our curiosity had been gathering strength concerning what was in that closed room. Gram's non-committal replies had but whetted it; and although neither she nor the Old Squire had forbidden us to unlock the door, we yet had the idea that there was something inside which, at least, they did not care to talk about.

Addison arrived first, but we were all close behind when he tried the key in the padlock. The lock was rusted and started hard. The key, however, fitted it. Addison unhooked the padlock from the staple, then shoved the door open, and we all peered in.

And it was a strange sight!

"Clocks!" exclaimed Addison. "Only look at the clocks!"

The little room was dim with dusty cobwebs, crossed and crisscrossed; but on two sides of it were tiers of shelves, one above another, three tiers high; and on all those shelves, and on yet another shelf partly under the eaves, stood small clocks, three deep on a shelf, clocks with wedge-shaped tops and little pointed spires at the front corners.

"My, did you ever see so many!" cried Ellen.

"All just alike, too!" she exclaimed, laughing wildly; for so many clocks standing there all mute in that dim, cobwebby room actually looked uncanny.

We went in, Ellen brushing down some of the cobwebs with her kitchen apron, and began counting those clocks.

There were eighty-four of them — all of the same size and just alike, down to the figure of Father Time, painted on the glass of the little front door.

"Now where do you suppose they all came from?" exclaimed Halstead.

"And what makes Gram keep them hidden away up here?" said Ellen.

"She has never told us a word about them," Doad chimed in. "She always said, 'Nothing of any consequence in there.' Why, we might have a clock in each of our rooms!"

"It is queer about them, and no mistake," remarked Addison.

"I guess the Old Squire must have robbed a clock factory at some time," he continued laughing; but of course we all knew better than that.

But eighty-four clocks! All just alike, and put away in this little garret room years and years ago, apparently.

Halstead brought one of the clocks out, set it on a chest, and we looked it over. It was a pendulum

THE OLD SQUIRE'S CLOCKS.

clock, about two feet tall, with the key tied to the striking bell, inside the door.

Addison wound it up. "New clock," said he. "It never was run any."

"There's a little label here under the striker," said Halstead. "Says, 'Smith & Skillings, Worcester, Mass., 1836. Brass works. Percussion hammer. Warranted for Four Years. Price, $6.00.'"

"Yes, siree!" cried Addison, again surveying the interior of the closet. "All nice, new, sitting-room clocks. Worth six dollars apiece. Jingo, this is a clock-mine!"

"But we must never let Gram and the Old Squire know we have been spying here," said Theodora. "We must lock the door again and put the key back where we got it."

"I suppose we had better," said Addison. "But where in the world did they ever get all these clocks?"

"And never speak of them!" exclaimed Ellen.

"There's some reason that we don't know about," Theodora said. "We ought not to have pried. So let's lock the closet again and put the key back on the high dresser. I think, too, that we had better say nothing about it. It is something they don't want us to know about, or they would have told us."

So, after yet another wondering look inside that closet, we locked the door. Ellen put the key back where she had found it, and we said no more about it.

In a way, too, Theodora was right. Those clocks had a history, and that old closet held a kind of family skeleton.

Thirty-one years before, while the Old Squire was a comparatively young man, he had set off for Portland, the week before Thanksgiving, with a two-horse load of dressed poultry, turkeys, chickens and geese, which Gram had been raising and fattening during that whole season. It was understood that if she took care of the poultry, she was to have half the proceeds.

There was over a ton of the poultry; and with a part of the profits the Squire was to purchase twenty yards of black silk, best quality, to make a gown, and a "fitch victorine" — something like a fur shoulder-cape.

He sold the poultry for more than three hundred dollars, but had to remain two nights in Portland, at the old Preble House, and while there fell in with a man named Skillings, of the firm of Smith & Skillings, Worcester, clock-makers. Skillings had recently come to Portland, and had three hundred clocks with him. The retail price was six dollars, but he offered the Old Squire a hundred and fifteen of them at three dollars apiece, and succeeded in convincing him that he could double his money on them by peddling them in the home county that winter.

So instead of coming home light, with the money for the poultry, and the black silk and fitch victorine for Gram, he arrived loaded down with clocks.

It is a matter of family record that Gram was not pleased, and that she met him with anything save an ovation. But the Old Squire was young and hopeful then; he expected to double his money selling those clocks. He rigged up a covered pung with a rack inside, which would carry twenty of them at a time, and began to make trips round and about the town and the adjoining towns.

But times were hard. It was easier to plan selling clocks at six dollars each than actually to sell them and get the money. In fact, he was able to get rid of but twenty-three of the clocks, and some of these at five and four dollars each. Some, too, he "trusted out" for payment the following year.

By spring he was sick enough of the investment; and when farm-work demanded his attention, he drew home a load of boards, constructed the closet in the attic, and stored the ninety-two clocks there till another winter, when he sold eight more.

By this time the clocks had become such a sore subject between Gram and himself, and he so dreaded to fetch them down again, that he embarked in lumbering the third winter.

And from that day onward, down to our time, neither he nor Gram mentioned the matter, nor so much as said clocks to each other. That closet had not been opened for twenty-nine years — till we unlocked it that day!

But eighty-four clocks! All just alike! It was impossible to forget them and one day, after we had begun planning to raise money for school expenses, we thought of those clocks. The idea of selling them occurred to us; and Addison and Ellen got the key again, and made another examination of the old closet.

"They are such old-style clocks, and so out of fashion, I don't believe any one would buy them now," Ellen remarked.

But Addison thought that they could be sold.

"Brush them up, oil them, and varnish the cases, and those clocks would bring four dollars apiece," said he. "They are nice old clocks, with good works in them."

"They're doing nobody any good up there, either," said Halstead. "Why, those clocks might all be ticking and doing some good in the world! And do *us* some good, too."

"But I don't believe the Old Squire and Gram would let us have them," Theodora remarked. "Those clocks have been put away up there for some reason we don't know of."

"Well, but they never go near them," urged Halstead. "Maybe they have forgotten all about them."

"Oh, no, they have not!" exclaimed Ellen. "Gram knows all about those clocks and why they are there."

"But perhaps they would let us have them to sell," said Addison.

"I wouldn't like to ask them," said Theodora.

"I wouldn't, either," said Ellen.

"Well, no more would I," Addison admitted. "I don't quite know why we shouldn't, but somehow it seems a little like digging up an old grave."

"Pooh! I'll ask them," said Halstead.

"No, don't!" exclaimed Theodora.

"No, Halse, not right out bold-faced," said Addison. "But perhaps we could bring it round easy, some time when the Old Squire is feeling real good-natured, and he and Gram are laughing over old times."

"Maybe," assented Theodora, "if you were to do it just right."

"Well, wait a bit," said Addison.

He was the oldest and craftiest among us; and at last he and Ellen hit on a plan for broaching the subject.

A day or two before Thanksgiving they two went quietly to the garret and wound up all those clocks, then with a goose feather and kerosene oil touched up the works, so that they would run. The clocks had been there so long that some of them could not be made to run at all; but they fixed up about sixty of them so that they could be started if the pendulum was given a swing.

What they did next was to set twenty of them at eleven o'clock, ten more at one minute past eleven, ten more at two minutes past eleven, and all the rest at three or four minutes past eleven.

At the old farm we used to have our Thanksgiving dinner at three o'clock in the afternoon. Addison's plan was to go to the garret just before we sat down to dinner, and set all those clocks going, so that by the time we had got well along with our dinner, and every one was feeling in a good and thankful mood, they would begin striking twelve, in platoons, so to speak, and keep it up.

None of us knew anything about this, however, except Addison and Ellen. They had thought best to

keep it quiet; for we had three of Gram's nieces visiting us that week from Philadelphia, and a girl named Molly Totherly, a distant relative, who was then attending school at Hebron Academy, about a day's drive from the old place. According to Gram's custom, the Thanksgiving dinner-table was set in the sitting-room, the largest room in the farmhouse. A door opened from it into the front hall; and after we had all been at table three-quarters of an hour, and the turkey was well disposed of and the plum pudding was brought on, Ellen suddenly exclaimed against the heat of the room.

"Do, please, grandmother, let's have the door into the hall open," she said.

"Why, yes, child, if you are too warm," replied the old lady. So up rose Ellen and set the door wide open. Addison had already left the door to the attic stairs ajar.

The plum pudding followed the turkey, as usual; the mince pie was being handed round, and Gram was beaming on her company, and the Old Squire was turning a joke on former dinners at the farm, when suddenly a horological commotion broke loose in the garret!

Twenty clocks, all starting in to strike at once, raised a tremendous tintinnabulation. Everybody at the dinner-table — save Addison and Ellen — sat up in astonishment.

Dong! dong! dong! Ding! ding! ding! Dang! dang! dang! on as many different keys, with new ones breaking in!

The Old Squire's hearing was not what it had once been. He looked first one way, then another, and then out of the window. "Seems to me I hear music," said he. "Where is it? Has anybody hired a brass band?"

But Gram exclaimed, "For mercy's sake, what ails the clock?"

There came a little lull, but immediately the next platoon opened on yet a different key, some striking fast, some slow.

"Appear to have lost the tune!" the Squire remarked, with his hand up to his best ear.

"Joseph!" Gram exclaimed, severely. "That's clocks striking. Can't you hear? And it isn't the kitchen clock," she added, with a perplexed look.

By that time Molly Totherly and Halse were up from the table and out in the hall, investigating; the rest of us sat spellbound. For by this time platoon number three had got at it: *Cling! cling! cling! Clong! clong! clong! Clung! clung! clung!*

The nieces from Philadelphia were amazed; but Addison and Ellen now jumped up from the table, to keep from shouting with laughter. Halstead and Theodora ran up-stairs, then came rushing down again.

"It is in that old closet, up-garret!" Halse cried. "Sounds as if more than fifty clocks were striking at once in there!" for all the rest had now started in, as if executing a grand *finale,* for which the previous efforts had been merely the overture!

But no sooner had Gram heard the word garret than she turned quite pale. The Old Squire was out in the hall. But Theodora came hastily round to the back of Gram's chair. "No, no!" she whispered in her ear. "It is just one of Ad's pranks," at which the old lady sat up.

"Oh, the rogue!" she cried, and then she began to laugh, and laughed till she was breathless.

"Come back here, father!" she finally called to Gramp. "They have found your load of clocks at last."

The Old Squire returned to the table, looking a little queer.

"We found them almost by accident," Theodora explained, hurriedly. "We didn't really mean to pry into anything."

"But do tell us, Gram, how there came to be so many of them!" cried Ellen.

"Oh, that isn't for me to tell!" cried the old lady, airily. "They are not *my* clocks. You will have to ask your grandfather about that."

"Oh, tell us, Gramp!" Ellen exclaimed.

Never had we seen the Old Squire so embarrassed; he looked actually sheepish.

"You will have to tell them now, Joseph!" cried Gram, exultantly. "You will have to own up to those clocks now!" She fell to laughing again.

But he would not enter on the subject at much length. "Oh, I took a consignment of clocks off a man's hands once," said he, in an offhand tone. "They didn't sell quite as well as I thought they might. And those you saw up-stairs were some I had left over."

"Yes," said Gram, with intense irony. "Just a few clocks left over! That's all! Just a few!" and she relapsed into another fit of laughter. Clearly, she considered that the Old Squire's description of the transaction was wholly inadequate.

But here Addison, who had been watching his chance, put in a word. "Those are pretty good clocks," he remarked. "They're a little out of style, but I think I could sell them. What will you take for the lot, sir?"

"Before there's any trading done," said Gram, "I want to say that I've got a black silk dress and a set of furs sunk somewhere in those clocks."

"Yes, yes, Ruth, that's so, that's so," replied the Old Squire, hastily. "You shall have all that the clocks bring."

With that, Addison addressed himself more particularly to Gram. "What do you say, Gram, to about a dollar apiece for those clocks?"

But she had dealt with too many tin pedlers in her day to be caught napping. "That's not enough," she

said. "But as it is all in the family, Addison, if you will promise me a hundred dollars out of it, you may have them and no more said."

Addison hastily consulted with Ellen and the rest of us. We all went up-stairs and looked again at the clocks. It seemed a promising speculation; so we wound up that Thanksgiving dinner with a bargain for the Old Squire's clocks, all amid much laughter on the part of our guests as well as ourselves.

I may add here that as far as we young folks were concerned, it was well that we had our laugh at the time and made sure of it. For we never had a chance afterwards to laugh much over the outcome of that clock speculation. If anything, we fared worse with those clocks than the Old Squire had, thirty years previously. Bad fortune seemed destined to go with them; — but that is part of another experience which runs far ahead of the limits of this volume.

While yet we lingered at table, bargaining for the clocks, Thomas and Catherine came jingling to the door in a new sleigh with Tom's colt. They had had their Thanksgiving dinner in advance of us and driven to the post office for the mail. They brought a letter for Addison from Master Pierson and came in to hear it read, for they were quite as eager as we to learn what "Old Joel" had to say.

His letter put even those clocks out of mind.

"Hullo, all you young Latinites up there!" (That was the way it began.) "How's Æsop's Fables? How's Cæsar and the Helvetii? How's Ariovistus rex Germanorum? Have you forgotten all you learned last winter? Did the mumps *mump* it all out of your heads? Better be brushing up and reviewing from now till Monday. Catch your breaths and get ready, because this winter I am just going to make you all everlastingly pick up and hiper! So be all ready to pitch in and not waste a minute. We will

have a Quiz on Latin to start with. I'm going to put you through four Books of Cæsar this winter. So get ready to do some tall studying, evenings.

"Tell 'Mother Ruth' to get the burlap down on the sitting-room carpet."

"My sakes," muttered Gram. "If this Latin business goes on another winter, I will have to buy a new carpet for that room."

"Ask the Old Squire how his 'Constitution' is holding out," Joel's letter ran on. "Ask him if the 'Monroe Doctrine' is still in force up that way? Tell him to have a writ of 'Habeas Corpus' ready to get me out of jail on, if I should happen to have a difficulty with School Agent Tibbetts. And, by the way, how is Old Toddy-Blossom's health this fall? Pretty quiet, isn't he, since that little episode of the County Attorney's letter which he opened? Not quite so rampant as he was at school meeting last spring? Nothing so quieting, sometimes, as a little wholesome fear. Particularly with a rumseller. One like Tibbetts who knows he is doing wrong and injuring everybody. That's the worst kind of a sinner — the fellow who knows he is doing wrong and keeps at it.

"I tell you boys, that is the one thing you can't live in peace and harmony with — rum, intoxicants. I defy you to. It demoralizes everything, puts everything wrong, drags the whole neighborhood down hill. You cannot have peace with it. You've got to fight it."

"Good!" exclaimed Gram. "That's just right!"

"That reminds me," the letter continued. "Tell that Alfred Batchelder, if it comes handy, that I've got a bigger stick than I had last winter. Also *verbum sap.* — if he learned Latin enough to know what that means."

"I don't believe he did," Catherine remarked, laughing. "That will be thrown away on Alfred."

"Say to Halstead, too, that I am very much in

earnest to have him start with right ideas this winter," the letter went on. "He had wrong notions in his head last winter, and they did him a whole lot of harm. I want to have the school amount to something to him this winter."

"O, shucks!" Halse exclaimed. "Old Joel's got only one idea in his head, and that is, study, study, study! For my part I want a little fun as I go along."

"That depends on what a fellow calls 'fun,'" Thomas remarked. "For my part I thought we had plenty of fun last winter."

"You call Latin fun, I suppose!" Halse retorted.

"The way we took it, yes, pretty good fun," said Thomas. "It made us work, but we got lots of fun out of it; and somehow it made us feel as if we were getting on in the world and were going to be somebody."

"Oh, you think you are going to be 'somebody,' do you?" said Halse, sarcastically.

"I don't know yet, and you don't," Tom rejoined, laughing.

Not relishing this sort of conversation Catherine interrupted it to ask Addison if that were all of Master Pierson's letter.

"No," said Ad and resumed, smiling broadly:

"Tell Round Head" (this humble chronicler) "that I've got to rub his ears for him again and wake him up. He hasn't really waked up, yet. He doesn't seem to know what he is in the world for. But tell him that I'm going to wake him up, this winter, or I will wear his ears out. What he needs is to make up his mind what he wants to do in the world, so as to go about it and feel certain of something."

It wasn't easy for me to see the joke in this, nor understand why the others laughed. It is said there are persons who never do really wake up to life and its actualities. I have often feared that I was one of that kind.

"Remember me to 'Sister' Theodora and to 'Sister' Ellen and 'Sister' Catherine," Joel's letter concluded. "I never had any sisters of my own, you know, and I never knew what I had missed by it till I boarded there at the Old Squire's so long. A fellow really does need sisters. Sisters are a great institution. So I've concluded to adopt all three of them — if they can put up with such a brother. And anyhow they will have hard work to shake me off!"

The girls looked at each other and laughed. Jocose as was the compliment, it pleased them immensely.

"Look for me Sunday afternoon," the letter ended, "with the old melodeon, all the old maps and books, and a few new ones. Vale. Selah. Yours for school,

"JOEL."

That was Joel, dear old Joel, Joel all over; the best schoolmaster we ever had.

THE END OF BOOK SECOND.